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## FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

# ISRAEL

## PART 8

January to December 1956

SECRET







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## FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING ISRAEL—PART 8

### GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

VR 1821/2

No. 1

### TREATMENT OF THE ARAB MINORITY IN ISRAEL

*Mr. Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received January 16)*

(No. 3. Confidential)  
Sir,

Tel Aviv,  
January 9, 1956.

It is more than two years since my predecessor, in his despatch No. 214 of the 29th of September, 1953, reviewed the attitude of the Israel Government towards the Arab minority. The problems to which the existence of the minority give rise continue to cause concern in Government and political circles. I therefore have the honour to submit this account of the present situation of the Arab community in Israel and of recent decisions taken by the Government concerning the minority.

2. As a result of continued Jewish immigration, the size of the Arab minority in recent years has shrunk in proportion to the Jewish majority and numbers only 198,000 souls out of a total population which has reached 1,774,000. Numerically therefore its importance and significance are slight. If the community was evenly distributed throughout the area of the State and thereby more susceptible to assimilation into the normal life of the country, no real problem would exist; but this is not the case. The Arab minority is centred in two distinct areas. The first and the larger lies in Galilee and consists mainly of the hilly and mountainous areas to the north of Nazareth and south of the Lebanese border. Agriculture and livestock are the staple industries of the village communities which embrace most of the Arab minority. The only Arab urban centre of any dimensions is Nazareth. The second area of Arab settlement runs in a narrow strip along the Israel-Jordan border approximately from the area opposite the Jordan village of Kalkilya to the crossroads at Megiddo south-east of Haifa. This area, known locally as the "Little Triangle," is all that remains in Israel territory of a larger area of Arab settlement which extended as far as Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin during the time of the Mandate. There is in addition a third element in the Israel-Arab minority composed of approximately 20,000 nomadic Arabs, mainly Bedouin, whose wanderings are virtually confined to the Negev south of Beersheba.

3. Both main groups of the Arab minority are therefore concentrated on or close to one or other of the borders between Israel and her Arab neighbours. In the north the Lebanese border is adjacent and the Syrian in close proximity across the Jordan valley. In the central area the most vulnerable section of the Israel-Jordan border is lined for almost its entire length by an area of Arab settlement. In these circumstances it is perhaps only natural that the Israel Government should feel compelled to introduce certain measures to protect the State either from subversive activity from within or from deliberate hostility from across the borders aided and abetted by the Arab community resident within Israel territory.

4. The principal measures adopted by the Israel Government in the past, upon which most Arab grievances are based, have been described in previous reports from this post. In brief they are: the Nationality Law, which in its present form deprives many Arabs permanently resident in Israel of the right to acquire full Israel nationality, the Absentees Property Law, under which the Government is empowered to confiscate land and property if its owners have at any time since the 29th of November, 1947, visited any Arab country, and Emergency Regulations under which military government is maintained in certain districts and movement within those districts is restricted. In theory all these regulations apply to Jew and Arab alike. In practice, however, they are so applied as to discriminate against the Arab population, which has no redress and, on account of its almost complete political disunity, is unable to bring any effective pressure to bear on the Government.

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5. Nevertheless, the Government record is not wholly black. Since the end of 1953 there have been certain improvements in the situation of the Israeli Arabs which perhaps reflect a slightly more benevolent outlook on the part of Israeli officialdom. In February 1954, as Mr. Moore reported in his despatch No. 32 of the 9th of February, 1954, some restrictions on the movement within Israel of members of the Arab minority were relaxed. Later in the same year municipal elections were held in Nazareth for the first time since the foundation of the State, and a purely local council constituted. Hitherto the administration of the town had been controlled by a Government nominee. The Israel Government has also pressed ahead with its plans for the gradual improvement in the living and social conditions of the Arab community in Israel. For example, during this current year an effective running water supply has for the first time been provided in Nazareth. In many other ways, which are described somewhat over-enthusiastically in the Israel Government's pamphlet on "The Arabs in Israel," a copy of which was forwarded to the Department with my Chancery letter 1926/19/55 of the 10th of October, conditions compare favourably with those enjoyed by many inhabitants of other countries of the Middle East.

6. The main issue is not, however, living and social conditions, but the degree of freedom and equality enjoyed by the Israel Arab as compared with the Israel Jew. No amount of running water can compensate for discrimination and victimisation. It is therefore encouraging that many of the political parties in the manifestos prepared for the general election last July should have laid such emphasis upon the need to review at once the situation of the Arab minority. Of the present coalition parties, Achdut Avoda demanded that "any aspect of injustice and deprivation against the Arab minority should be uprooted and military rule should be abolished." Mapam described the abolition of military rule as "an urgent necessity for the Arab population as well as for the security of the State." The Progressive Party, in a slightly more guarded manner, called for the "abolition of restrictions on the movement of Arabs save in border areas," whilst Hapoel-Hamizrahi-Hamizrahi were even more cautious in proposing the "gradual abolition of military rule." The attitude of Mapai, the Prime Minister's party, has consistently been less forthcoming. In May 1955, Mr. Ben Gurion, as Minister of Defence, replied to a Mapam and Communist Party resolution calling for the abolition of military rule in certain areas by stating that the present situation made it impossible to relax security precautions along the border. The Mapai manifesto was only slightly less discouraging in that it promised merely that security measures would be restricted to vital security requirements and would not unduly affect the rights and freedom of movement of border inhabitants. The Mapai view predominates in the Basic Principles of the Government, which provide that freedom of movement and other civil rights will be restricted for security reasons only.

7. It nevertheless appears that, since the formation of the new Government, Mr. Ben Gurion's coalition partners have been able to persuade him at least to devote serious attention to the present position with a view to further relaxations. This has perhaps been the price that the Prime Minister has had to pay for the acceptance by his coalition partners of views and policies with which they are not wholly in agreement. As a result it was announced on the 29th of November by the Prime Minister that a committee would be set up "to study the possibility of limiting and/or abolishing the scope of military government." The committee is to be guided by the Basic Principles of the Government mentioned above and is in addition to review the position of Nazareth and decide whether the area should remain under the control of a military governor. It was at first hoped that the committee would be in a position to report to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of the Knesset by the end of this year. It is now recognised that a full enquiry will take appreciably longer. No time limit for the enquiry has therefore been set.

8. The value of a report from a committee of this nature naturally depends to a great extent upon the integrity and ability of its members. Fortunately the Government have nominated men of recognised standing in whom some confidence can be placed. The chairman of the committee is Professor Ratner, who is at present head of the Department of Architecture at Haifa Technion and was formerly Israeli Military Attaché in Moscow. The other two members of the committee are Mr. Daniel Auster, a former Mayor of Jerusalem and a leading member of the Progressive Party, and Mr. Y. Salomon, a lawyer from Haifa.

9. The appointment of this committee has been received with general approval and numerous applications have already been received from those wishing to give evidence. There is some optimism that the final report of the committee will lead to a further amelioration of the position of the Arab minority, but no one seriously believes or expects that as a result of its deliberations military government will be abolished and all restrictions lifted. So long as the hostility of the Arab world towards Israel is maintained, the Arab minority within Israel must reconcile itself to certain restrictions and discriminations. No Israel Government would feel justified in lifting entirely these regulations which are regarded with some justification as essential to the security of the majority of the population. As a result of this recent Government decision, the Israel Arab should, however, be able to look forward to the gradual removal of the more irksome restrictions on his movements and activities.

10. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut and Cairo.

I have, &c.,

J. W. NICHOLLS.



VR 1073/18

No. 2

# CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ON JANUARY 19, 1956

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Nicholls (Tel Aviv)*

(No. 14. Secret)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office,  
January 19, 1956.*

The Israeli Ambassador called upon me this afternoon. He said that his Government was at present even more worried about the immediate future than the long-term future. This had not been the case up to now. Their anxiety had been increased by recent events in Jordan. His Government has resented the suggestions made in certain British papers that the British troops recently flown to Cyprus had been sent in order to be able to protect Jordan from Israeli attack. I said that I had not seen such reports; that the truth was exactly what had been stated in the official release, that they had been sent to enable us to protect British lives in the area.

2. The Ambassador said that his Government's main worry was Egypt. They now had their new arms and there was great activity going on training troops. The Egyptian army was preparing for war and the Israeli information was that they would attack Israel in the summer. He said that the West's policy of not giving arms to Israel was driving Israel towards a war in the immediate future. The Israelis felt that they were now in a desperate position.

3. The Ambassador next mentioned the Johnston Plan and said that his Government had high hopes of good results from that plan, particularly because it would involve Israel and Jordan co-operating in a practical manner.

4. The Ambassador continued by stating that the Prime Minister's Guildhall speech, however well intentioned, had been unfortunate. It had not contributed to peace and security. Israel was willing to meet the Arab States to discuss peace terms, but would not make unilateral concessions.

5. He asked what we thought was going to happen in the area. The Soviet penetration was a danger to the United Kingdom just as much as to Israel. On the one side there was the feudal dynasty in Saudi Arabia, the military junta in Egypt, a régime of uncertain quality and stability in Syria, and a doubtful situation in Jordan. On the other side was Israel, which the West would not acknowledge as a friend, although Israel stood for the same causes of democratic freedom and would fight to the end for those causes. Israelis felt that they were being punished in some way by the West. The Israeli Prime Minister's position was analogous to that of M. Benes.

6. His Government regretted United States and United Kingdom competition in the area. I asked what he meant by that. He said he was referring to our policies in Saudi Arabia and over the Baghdad Pact. Anything which diminished British and American influence was regretted by Israel.

7. He concluded by saying that whatever happened Israel would fight desperately.

8. I said that I did not propose to deal with all the points which he had raised, many of which would lead to protracted argument. Over arms, I said that in our view Israel was at the present time more than a match for Egypt, and any combination of her Arab neighbours. I agreed that that position might change as time went on. I said that we had just authorised the sale of some aircraft to Israel when the Syrian incident took place and that we could not sell arms to Israel at a time when she was being condemned by the Security Council for an action like that. When that debate was over and a resolution had been passed, we would reconsider the position. I added that our sales in those circumstances might not be confined to the aircraft about which the Israel Government had already been informed.

9. I asked him to comprehend the dilemma with which we were faced. If the West were to supply to Israel a quantity of arms equivalent to that supplied to Egypt, the consequence would be a second consignment by the Russians to one of the Arab States. If we tried to balance that, before long Israel would find herself surrounded by Arab States armed to the teeth by the Russians and quite likely with Russian



technicians and officers making them more efficient. It would be the end of the British position in Jordan. If that situation arose it would be even more menacing to Israel than the present one. I said that I thought that a better policy over arms was for us to try to convince the Arabs of the grave danger which they run in accepting Soviet arms and so to try to prevent further shipments. I said that I did not believe that all the Arab leaders wished to be placed in the position of having to rely entirely on the Russians.

10. We next discussed the Tripartite Declaration. I said that I knew that in Israel there were doubts as to whether we would fulfil our obligations under it. The Ambassador said that no-one in Israel believed that we would. I said that there were also doubts in the Arab States as to whether we would carry out our obligations. But we had said again and again that we intended to honour them. The Ambassador said that no-one in Israel would believe that we intended to honour them until we had staff talks with the Israel military authorities. I said that we had had no staff talks with Egypt or with Syria and there was equal doubt on their part as to whether we would effectively help them should they be attacked by Israel. I said that I would consider whether there was some way of bringing it home to the Governments in the area that we did intend what we said in the Tripartite Declaration.

11. We then discussed the settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. The Ambassador asked why we wanted Egypt to have a land corridor to Jordan. That would not be in our own interests. I said that it was not a question of us wanting one thing or another. All we wanted was a settlement. I myself felt that the atmosphere just at the moment was more conducive to a settlement than it had been for some time. That was why an incident such as the Syrian one was so unfortunate. The Ambassador asked me why I thought that the time was more conducive. I replied that the reasons from Israel's point of view had already been stated and repeated what I said earlier, that I felt that some of the Arab leaders realised that they would be driven more and more to depend on Russian assistance if peace was not made.

12. With regard to the Johnston Plan, I doubted whether much progress would be made upon it until the wider negotiations, direct or indirect, had made progress.

13. I told him that the aspects of the problem which I had mentioned would, I was sure, be discussed during our talks in Washington. I agreed with the Ambassador that the situation was an exceedingly anxious one.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda, Paris and Washington, to the Permanent United Kingdom Representative to the United Nations at New York and to the Head of the Political Office with Middle East Forces.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

VR 1011/1

No. 3

# ISRAEL: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1955

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received February 23)

(No. 24. Confidential)

Tel Aviv,

Sir,

February 20, 1956.

I have the honour to transmit a chronological list of the principal events in Israel during 1955, and to submit the following brief account of developments during the year under review.

## Introduction

2. Writing a year ago I was able to record my impression that there had been, in 1954, a perceptible lightening of the atmosphere. I pointed to a number of encouraging signs both in the evolution of Israeli policy towards her Arab neighbours and in her own economic situation; and I was able, too, to record a growing respect and liking for the United Kingdom. To-day all these trends have been reversed, and it must be my main object in this despatch to trace the course and causes of this deterioration.

## Arab-Israel Relations

3. The year opened badly for Israel. The *Bat Galim*, a small Israeli vessel which had been sent, as a test-case, to breach the Egyptian blockade, was still in Egyptian hands (though its crew was released on January 1); and at a meeting on the 13th of January the Security Council, though most of its members condemned the blockade as illegal, declined to take effective steps to force Egypt to release the vessel. Shortly afterwards, despite informal appeals from many quarters, including Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government, an Egyptian military court sentenced to death two Egyptian Jews accused of espionage and subversive activities and imposed heavy prison sentences on a number of others. The execution of the death sentence was a very real shock to Israeli public opinion, which had already been brought to an emotional state by the suicide, in gaol, of one of five Israeli soldiers captured by Syrian forces.

4. The events described in the preceding paragraph had far-reaching consequences. To the excitable Israeli mind they proved the irreconcilable hostility of the Arab States towards Israel and the inability or unwillingness of the Western Powers to mitigate it. The fact that the *Bat Galim* had been deliberately exposed to seizure in the hope of extorting from the Security Council an effective ruling against Egypt; that the five soldiers captured by the Syrians had been engaged in an intelligence mission on Syrian soil and that there was no evidence that the one who had committed suicide had been ill-treated; and that the Jews sentenced to death or imprisonment by the Egyptians had almost certainly been engaged in espionage if nothing more—all this did nothing to lessen the average Israeli's conviction that the world was in league against him or his perennial tendency to regard every setback as an immediate threat to the very existence of his country. These feelings were intensified by a series of frontier incidents, mainly along the Israel-Egypt border, ranging from the theft by infiltrators of irrigation pipes and farm equipment and the blowing-up of water pipelines to the murder of several settlers and the death of several Israeli soldiers in clashes between frontier forces.

5. The Government did nothing to instil a sense of proportion about these events into the minds of the population; indeed, it expressed its own indignation so intemperately that it doubled and re-doubled the general agitation, with the result that (not for the first time or the last) it soon imagined itself to be under irresistible pressure from a public opinion which it had helped to create. It seems certain that the resignation of the Minister of Defence, Mr. P. Lavon, on February 17, reflected the resultant conflict in the Cabinet between the moderates led by Mr. Sharett, who for six months had successfully set his face against retaliation as an instrument of policy, and the activists, of whom Mr. Lavon was a prominent supporter, who believed that only stern reprisals could keep the Arabs in check. Ironically enough



it was Mr. Ben-Gurion, himself by temperament an activist, who was called in by Mr. Sharett to take over the vacant Defence Ministry—a post which he retained when, in October, he succeeded Mr. Sharett as Prime Minister.

6. The reasons for Mr. Sharett's choice, and for Mr. Ben-Gurion's decision to return to active politics after a year of voluntary exile at Sde-Boker, were undoubtedly of an internal political nature and will be touched on in a later section of this review. But the consequences in the sphere of external affairs, whether *post hoc* or *propter hoc* were immediate. Mr. Ben-Gurion assumed his new office on February 21. On February 23 the series of frontier incidents to which I have alluded culminated in a particularly daring incursion by a small group of infiltrators who raided a military establishment not far from Tel Aviv and two days later, on their way back to Gaza, murdered a harmless cyclist. On February 28 a strong Israeli force penetrated to Gaza and blew up Egyptian installations, killing thirty-seven of the defenders and wounding thirty. A half-hearted attempt was at first made to represent the engagement as having started on Israel soil, but the pretence deceived no one and was at once abandoned. Thus, after following for nearly six months what is commonly known as a policy of restraint, the Israel Government reverted to its earlier policy of reprisals and so embarked on a course which was destined in the course of the year to have a catastrophic effect on Israel's strategic situation and international standing.

7. An analysis of the policy of retaliation would be out of place in this review. I will only say here that in Israeli eyes retaliation is the only available method, short of war, of protecting the frontiers against infiltration and encroachments in the particular circumstances with which Israel is confronted—namely, where neighbouring Governments tolerate, connive at, or even on occasions undertake violations of the frontier; where the frontiers, as such, are virtually indefensible; and where the Great Powers are unable or unwilling to oblige Israel's neighbours to respect the armistice agreements. The argument is open to dispute, though it must be conceded that it is easier to refute it than to suggest an alternative policy. What is not in question is that the Gaza raid of February 28 marked the beginning of a new deterioration of Arab-Israel relations. There is no reason to doubt Colonel Nasser's assertion that the raid convinced him that Israel's intentions were aggressive and that Egypt must at all costs strengthen her defences by procuring modern arms in quantity; and that this led him in the end to the now notorious arms deal with Czechoslovakia. There is no doubt either that the raid led to a sharp increase in Egyptian acts of hostility, ranging from sniping, mining and shelling by regular forces to organised raids by the so-called *fedayeen*, and that these in turn led to the Israeli raids of May 28, August 31, October 27 and November 2.

8. The efforts of the United Nations Treaty Supervision Organisation to put an end to this melancholy cycle of incident and reprisal were unavailing, though it is likely that, but for the tireless activity of General Burns and his staff, the scale of violence would have been greater. His attempts to bring the two sides together met with little success; Israeli and Egyptian representatives, it is true, held a series of meetings under his chairmanship between June 28 and August 16, to discuss ways of removing tension along the Gaza border, but the talks were abortive. Nor were the various interventions of the Security Council any more effective; their condemnation of Israel for the Gaza raid on March 19, their inconclusive meetings on April 6 and 19 to consider Israeli complaints of Egyptian attacks, their appeal to Israel and Egypt on September 8—all served only to convince each of the two parties either that right was entirely on their side or that they could not hope for justice from the highest international forum. When the year closed, General Burns' proposals of April for reducing tension on the Gaza border were still outstanding and, in the Nitzana area, both Egyptian and Israeli troops were still entrenched in positions prohibited to them by the armistice agreement.

9. To complete the picture of what is commonly called in Israel the "security situation," it is only necessary to add that the Jordan border remained remarkably quiet throughout the year, though not of course free from incidents and bloodshed; that the Lebanese border as usual gave no trouble, except that a number of Israelis were killed and wounded in September in an attack on a bus mounted (almost certainly) by refugees hired in the Lebanon by Egyptian organisers; and that it was the Israel-Syrian border which, after months of almost complete calm, finally erupted into the most serious and, from Israel's point of view, the most damaging

incident of the year. On December 11, strong Israeli forces attacked Syrian posts on the eastern side of Lake Kinneret, killing more than fifty of the defenders. The attack was variously explained as a reprisal for the shelling of an Israeli police launch on the previous day; as a warning to Syria to prevent interference with Israeli fishermen during the winter fishing season; and as a reply to the Syrian-Egyptian pact of October 20. Even in Israel public opinion was shocked by the disproportion between the scale of the attack and the provocation; and the unanimous disapproval of the Security Council—embodied after the end of the year in an unusually strong condemnatory resolution—seemed for the first time to evoke a salutary response in Israel.

#### Anglo-American Peace Moves

10. It was against this troubled background, and in part because of it, that the Western Powers undertook during 1955 the seemingly impossible task of bringing about an Arab-Israel settlement. Already in April Sir Anthony Eden had announced in the House of Commons that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to guarantee a settlement of the dispute which took into account the refugee problem, the question of frontiers and the use of the Jordan waters. On August 26 Mr. Dulles carried matters a stage further in a public speech in which he hinted at the need not only for frontier rectifications but also for territorial concessions by Israel, at the same time pledging United States financial help in the resettlement of refugees and a guarantee of the frontiers when finally agreed. Finally, in a speech at the Guildhall on November 11, Sir Anthony Eden endorsed these promises and made it clear that in the view of Her Majesty's Government peace could only be attained if Israel would abandon her insistence on the permanency of the existing armistice lines and if the Arab States would recognise that the 1947 partition scheme could no longer be applied without modification.

#### The Arms Question

11. These pronouncements progressively brought home to the Israel Government and people the failure of their persistent campaign for defence pacts with the United Kingdom or United States or both, designed to guarantee their present boundaries. By the end of the year it was also becoming plain that their equally persistent campaign for Western arms with which to protect those boundaries was also about to fail. Allegations that the West, by arming the Arabs, was violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, had been current since the beginning of the year; but it was Egypt's decision in August to accept a Czechoslovak offer of Soviet arms which raised almost to the point of hysteria Israel's demands for arms from the West to restore the military equilibrium. The Western Powers, however, saw no virtue in competing with the Soviet *bloc* and did not respond to Israel's appeals. American delaying tactics might well not have stood up to the intensive diplomatic and propaganda pressure deployed by Israel, but for the Kinneret raid described above; this, by a singular piece of ineptitude, was staged on the eve of Mr. Sharett's departure from the United States, when the State Department were on the point of giving him a more or less forthcoming reply. As a result by the year's end, Israel had been able to make no significant addition to her armed strength except for some fifty obsolete Sherman tanks procured from the United Kingdom through French intermediaries, and some light tanks, artillery and Ouragan fighters supplied by France; a negligible achievement compared with the material acquired by Egypt from Czechoslovakia, the British and United States arms supplied to Iraq and the British tanks and equipment sent to Egypt under old contracts. It is no flight of fancy to suggest that Israel, by her attack on Gaza in February was herself responsible for Egypt's decision in August to accept Communist arms; and, by the same token, it was the irresponsible Kinneret raid in December which destroyed Israel's chances of acquiring counter-balancing supplies of arms from the West.

#### Israel's International Situation

12. Enough has been said to show that Israel's international situation at the close of the year was far from happy. Arab hostility had, if anything, increased. The balance of military strength was in process of shifting markedly against her. Hopes of bilateral defence pacts with the United States or the United Kingdom had been abandoned, and the Governments of both these countries had revealed



their belief that Israel would have to make territorial concessions in order to make a settlement possible. In addition, the Czechoslovak arms deal with Egypt had revealed the Soviet Union's intention to fish in the troubled waters of the Middle East and had made it plain to the Israel Government that in future the policy of the Western Powers in the Middle East would inevitably be guided at least as much by cold war considerations as by the objective rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israel dispute. For good measure, the Bandoeng Conference (from which Israel was excluded) and Marshal Tito's visit to Cairo had demonstrated that Israel could not even count on the friendship of those countries which professed their independence of the two main Power blocs. Only Burma, whose Prime Minister visited Israel in May, seemed to measure up to the somewhat exacting standards of friendship set by Israel; and the relevance of Burma's friendship to Israel's problems was precisely nil.

13. In this gloomy situation it was not surprising that each new setback to Israel's hope and each accretion of strength to her enemies should reinforce the activists or that, from September onwards when the scale of the Czechoslovak arms deal was realised, voices should be heard preaching the merits of a preventive war. There is little doubt that such a course was advocated by the High Command and that it received some consideration from the Government. On this issue, fortunately, Mr. Ben-Gurion—whose impulsiveness in day-to-day matters never wholly submerges his sense of history—threw his weight behind the moderates inside and outside the Government, pointing out that even a victorious war would still leave Israel isolated among her hostile Arab neighbours. By the end of the year the possibility of a preventive war was no longer a topic of serious conversation, even if it remained in many minds as a desperate gamble to which Israel might still one day be forced to resort.

#### Anglo-Israel Relations

14. Israel's growing regard and respect for the United Kingdom suffered a serious setback in 1955. It would be tedious to describe in detail the misunderstandings and unfounded suspicions which led by degrees from disillusionment to something like hostility. Suffice it to say that the Government, the press and, to a lesser extent public opinion, decided that Her Majesty's Government's references to the need for a settlement of the frontier question concealed an intention to call on Israel for disproportionate sacrifices; that their refusal of arms was designed to make it impossible for Israel to refuse concessions; and that, if the United States Government was also unwilling to meet Israel's requests, this was the result of British pressure and intrigue. Until the Guildhall speech of November 11, the dominant emotion was perhaps regret that the United Kingdom could be so blind to its own interests as to reject Israeli friendship on Israeli terms. Thereafter regret gave way to the suspicion that British interests might after all lie with the Arab States rather than Israel, and that British policy was not so much misguided as deliberately antagonistic. Many Israelis—among them Mr. Ben-Gurion—believed that we wanted the Negev transferred in whole or in part to Jordan for our own military purposes; and this suspicion of our motives heightened the defiant fervour with which Israeli leaders announced in and out of season that in no circumstances would Israel yield an inch of her territory.

15. Despite the deterioration of political relations, it is satisfactory to be able to record that Israeli admiration for British institutions and (in all fields outside the Middle East) for British political wisdom and maturity, remained unchanged. The ceremonial planting of the Queen Elizabeth Coronation Forest on May 3, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Jewish Brigade and other similar occasions bore ample witness to the underlying friendliness and admiration of the Israeli people for things British.

#### Internal Affairs

16. If I have devoted the greater part of this review to Israel's external problems, it is because they dominate the Israeli scene. Domestic politics, though far from uneventful in 1955, can be dealt with more briefly. The outstanding event was, as I have already indicated, the return of Mr. Ben-Gurion to active politics after rather more than a year of sojourn in the Negev wilderness. There is little doubt that Mr. Sharett asked him to take over the Ministry of Defence because he

thought that Mr. Lavon's eviction from the Cabinet would otherwise prove too damaging to Mapai's election prospects. Whether Mr. Sharett hoped or feared that Mr. Ben-Gurion would in consequence return to active leadership of the party and the country is an open question; that, at all events, is how it turned out. Nevertheless, when the General Zionists broke up the coalition Government on June 29 by abstaining on a vote of confidence, Mr. Ben-Gurion's intentions were still in doubt and it was Mr. Sharett who was invited to form a new Government to hold office until the elections. These took place on July 26. They confirmed Mapai's position as the strongest party; they also confirmed that, until Israel adopted a constituency system (for which Mr. Ben-Gurion had been conducting a vigorous one-man campaign), no visible Government could ever be found in Israel except on the basis of a coalition of disparate elements dominated by Mapai. But in other respects the elections brought significant changes in the political scene; Mapai lost ground to the parties of the Left (Mapam and Achdut Avoda), while the General Zionists suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the ultra Right-wing Herut. As a result the task of Cabinet building—entrusted at once to Mr. Ben-Gurion—proved even longer and more difficult than usual, and it was not until November 2 that he was able to present to the Knesset a coalition Government embracing the Progressives and the Religious bloc on the Right and Mapam and Achdut Avoda on the Left. This was a somewhat heterogeneous assembly of conflicting interests; moreover, of Mapai's four associates in the coalition, only the Progressives were too weak to bring down the Government whenever they chose. Nevertheless, under the spur of external danger, the new coalition held together without undue difficulty; the absence from it of the General Zionists and the presence in it of Achdut Avoda and Mapam made no perceptible difference in the Government's policy at home or abroad. Major decisions continued, in practice, to be taken by the leaders of Mapai and sometimes—as in the case of the disastrous Kinneret raid—by Mr. Ben-Gurion alone.

#### Economic Affairs

17. If 1955 was politically a bad year for Israel, it was certainly, though less obviously, a worse one economically. At the beginning of the year prospects seemed fair enough; the standard of living was rising, prices were relatively stable, production was increasing, and the import and export figures suggested that the slow climb towards a balance of trade would continue. As the months passed, however, it became increasingly clear that all was not well. Exports were seen to be stagnating, while imports remained high. Largely owing to Government overspending, the volume of credit and money in circulation rose steadily, creating a "demand inflation" which led on the one hand to claims for wage increases and on the other to higher prices and the loss of export markets. The trade figures for the year showed a slight fall in exports at £1.150 million as against a 16 per cent. increase in 1954, while imports rose by 14 per cent. to £1.586 million. This reversal of the favourable trend of 1953 and 1954 caused great anxiety in Government and banking circles, but it did not prevent a growing clamour for all-round wage-increases. The Government's difficulties in maintaining the wage-freeze were not made any less by the claims put forward by various professional groups (including senior civil servants, engineers and salaried doctors) whose unanswerable case for greater "differentials" was endorsed by an independent committee set up to consider their claim. The Government's attempts to wriggle out of its promise to accept the findings of this committee were still continuing when the year ended.

18. Almost the only bright spot in the otherwise gloomy economic picture was a successful strike of oil at Heletz near the north-east corner of the Gaza strip. This, after a long and discouraging campaign of drilling in various parts of the country, aroused immense and perhaps exaggerated jubilation; the successful well yields only some 45 tons a day, although the oil is of good quality.

19. Irrigation continued to make progress in 1955, notably with the inauguration of the first stage of the Yarkon pipeline, which now taps the springs of Rosh Ha'yin for the benefit of the northern Negev. But the Johnston Plan for the Jordan waters remain a plan only; in two visits to the area Mr. Johnston successfully cleared all the outstanding technical problems with the two sides, but Syria's political objections led the Arab States concerned to postpone a final decision *sine die*. Meanwhile, work on the Banot Ya'acob diversion scheme in the demilitarised zone on the Syrian border, which had been discontinued in 1953 at



the request of the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organisation and the Security Council, remained at a standstill, though Israeli statements that they could not be expected to defer work indefinitely made it clear that, here too, difficulties and perhaps dangers lay ahead in 1956.

20. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Washington, Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Bagdad and Paris, and to the Political Officer with Headquarters, Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.

# Enclosure

## List of principal events in Israel during 1955

### January

- 1 *Bat Galim* crew returned to Israel after three months' detention in Egypt.
- 13 Israel soldier in Syrian hands committed suicide.  
Security Council adjourned debate on *Bat Galim* and referred the issue back to the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission.
- 15 Israel rejected scheme proposed by General Burns for the partition of the demilitarised zone along the frontier with Syria.
- 26 Mr. Eric Johnston arrived for talks on development and use of the Jordan river.
- 27 Two Egyptian Jews sentenced to death and others to imprisonment by a high military court as a result of the Zionist trial.
- 31 Exchange of notes between Israel and United States Governments covering grant-in-aid to Israel of \$40 million for the year 1954-55.

### February

- 8 Finance Minister presented 1955-56 budget (£1.630 million) to Knesset.
- 21 Mr. Ben-Gurion assumed office as Minister of Defence in the place of Mr. P. Lavon, who resigned.
- 23 Mr. Eric Johnston returned to United States after considerable progress in Jordan water talks.
- 28 Raid by Israeli forces on Egyptian positions near Gaza railway station. Heavy Egyptian casualties were reported.

### March

- 6 M.A.C. condemns Israel for Gaza incident.
- 15 Mr. Dulles said Gaza incident had caused a setback to United States plans to extend the security guarantees desired by Israel.
- 21 Israel issued statement rejecting Saleh Salem's suggestion that Israel might cede the Negev to Egypt.
- 23 Foundation stone of Tel Aviv University laid.
- 24 Tenth anniversary of formation of Jewish Brigade celebrated.
- 29 Security Council passed resolution condemning Israel for Gaza attack.
- 30 Security Council adopted resolution calling on Israel and Egypt to co-operate with United Nations Chief of Staff in trying to find ways of decreasing border tension.
- 31 The Knesset approved the ordinary budget for 1955-56 totalling £1.631 million.

### April

- 3 Sir Anthony Eden stated in the House of Commons that Her Majesty's Government would guarantee a settlement of the Israel-Arab dispute which took into account the refugee problem, the frontier question and the use of Jordan waters.
- 6 Security Council met to consider Israel's complaint of "repeated attack" by Egypt against Israel armed forces.
- 18 Jerusalem Commanders' Agreement accepted by Israel and Jordan, though no formal document signed.

SECRET

### April

- 19 Security Council reconvened to consider further Israeli complaints against attacks by Egypt and decided that in view of the resolutions of March 30 no new action was necessary.
- 21 Israel accepted three of General Burns' proposals for reduction of border tension but rejected joint patrols.
- 24 Conference of Asian and African States at Bandoeng adopted resolution in support of Arab rights in Palestine.
- 25 B.O.A.C. suspended its service to Israel owing to shortage of aircraft.
- 29 Israel celebrated 7th Independence Day.

### May

- 3 Planting ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Forest.  
Second phase of Hula reclamation scheme complete.
- 8 Elections to 8th Histadrut Convention held, the first since 1949.
- 18 Israel army unit destroyed Egyptian post in Gaza Strip following a mining incident, in which three Israeli officers were killed.
- 23 Final Histadrut election results published. In an 84.7 per cent. poll, Mapai gained 57.74 per cent. of the votes.
- 29 Prime Minister of Burma arrived in Israel for an official visit.

### June

- 1 Mr. Sharett advocated in Knesset a defence pact between Israel and a Great Power.
- 6 Israel informed United Nations Secretary-General that she supported the proposal of the Chief of Staff of the U.N.T.S.O. for a high level meeting between Israel and Egypt.
- 13 Egypt rejected proposal for direct high level talks.
- 17 Israel proposed four-point plan for reduction of tension and restoration of quiet in Gaza area.
- 22 Judgment delivered in Kastner-Gruenwald case.  
Contract signed between El Al and Bristol Aeroplane Company for purchase of three Britannia 300 long-range aircraft.
- 28 Representatives of Israel and Egypt opened discussions at Kilo 95 on ways of removing tension along Gaza Strip.
- 29 Government resigned following General Zionists' abstention previous day on a vote of confidence on the Government handling of the Kastner case. A new coalition was formed the same day without General Zionists.
- 30 Second Knesset went into recess prior to general election.

### July

- 3 British vessel s.s. *Anshun* shelled by Egyptian batteries in Gulf of Akaba.
- 12 Israel and United States signed agreement to provide Israel with an atomic reactor for peaceful purposes.
- 16 Israel acquired two British "Z" class destroyers.
- 19 Yarkon-Negev water pipeline opened by President.
- 26 Knesset and municipal elections.
- 27 Israel airliner shot down over Bulgaria with loss of fifty-eight lives.

### August

- 7 Dedication of Bar Ilan University near Tel Aviv.
- 9 Publication of final report by Guri Committee on civil service salaries.  
Mizrahi and Hapoel Hamizrahi movements announced decision to reunite.
- 15 Third Knesset opened by President.
- 16 Egypt-Israel talks postponed indefinitely at request of both sides.
- 18 President charged Mr. Ben-Gurion with formation of broad coalition.
- 21 Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Guri Committee for salary increases for higher civil servants.
- 24 Egypt announced withdrawal from Israel-Egypt talks.
- 26 Mr. Dulles' major policy statement on Israel-Arab dispute.
- 27 Her Majesty's Government issued statement in support of Mr. Dulles' speech.

SECRET



## August

- 30 Israel complained to Security Council of deep penetration into Israel by Egyptian *fedayeen* units.
- 31 Israel army destroyed Egyptian military command post at Khan Yunis. Zionist General Council concluded session devoted principally to question of North African immigration.

## September

- 1 Anglo-Israeli exchange of notes regarding reciprocal reduction of visa fees.  
An Israel Air Force Meteor shot down two Egyptian Vampires over Israel territory.  
A special session of the Knesset called to consider the problem of immigration from North Africa. Resolution adopted calling for the mobilisation of funds by Israel and World Jewry.
- 8 Security Council called for order and tranquillity in Gaza border area and supported General Burns' proposals for the setting up of an effective physical barrier.
- 16 Jewish year 5716 opens.
- 20 Israel military spokesman announced that Egyptian forces had removed border markers in the Nitzana demilitarised zone.
- 21 A unit of the Israel defence forces entered the Nitzana demilitarised zone.  
Mr. Robert Turton, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, arrived on a brief visit.
- 22 Two Israelis killed and ten wounded in an attack upon a bus travelling from Haifa to Safad.
- 23 First strike of oil in Israel at Heletz.
- 29 Israel Prime Minister sees Soviet Chargé d'Affaires for clarification of Soviet policy following report of an Egyptian contract with Czechoslovakia for the supply of arms.

## October

- 2 Israel forces withdrawn from Nitzana demilitarised zone as a result of "a satisfactory settlement of outstanding issues."
- 4 Israel Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that Israel would "regard herself free to resume work on her national water schemes" if the Arab States rejected the Johnston Plan.
- 6 New 10,000-ton Israel mixed passenger cargo liner s.s. *Israel* docked in Haifa after maiden voyage from Southampton.
- 8 Her Majesty's Government issued a statement on arms supplied to Israel as a result of inaccurate reports originating in a French newsletter and quoted in the Egyptian press.  
A B.A.O.C. Bristol Britannia 100 arrived at Lydda on a proving flight, was inspected by local officials and gave a demonstration flight.
- 11 Israel Ambassador in Washington submitted to the State Department a request for a security guarantee and heavily increased arms shipments.  
Second strike of oil at Heletz.
- 12 Mr. Eric Johnston visited Israel for further water talks.
- 12 First consignment of twelve French Ouragan jet aircraft arrived approx. in Israel.
- 12 Agreement signed for a loan of up to £2½ million from Lloyds Bank to Keren Hayesod and the Jewish Agency to be used for purchases in the United Kingdom.
- 18 In the course of foreign affairs debate in the Knesset, Israel Prime Minister appealed for a security pact and arms for Israel.
- 22 An Israel defence force unit captured five Syrian soldiers, including an officer and a sergeant.
- 23 Mr. Sharett left Israel for Paris to confer with the Foreign Ministers of Britain, the United States, Russia and France, and to consult Israel's Ambassadors to those countries.  
General Burns flew to New York to report to the United Nations Secretary-General.

## October

- 27 Egyptian forces took up positions inside Israel in the Nitzana demilitarised zone.  
Israel army attacked an Egyptian military post at Kuntilla 5 km. inside Egyptian territory.
- 29 Cornerstone laid for the Sir Winston Churchill Auditorium at the Haifa Technion on Mount Carmel. Sir Winston was represented by his son, Mr. Randolph Churchill.

## November

- 1 Mr. Sharett returned to Israel from Paris and Geneva.
- 2 Israel army attacked Egyptian troops dug in on the Israel side of the border in the Nitzana demilitarised zone. The Egyptians suffered heavy casualties.  
Ben-Gurion presented new five-party Government to the Knesset.
- 5 United Nations Secretary-General handed Israel and Egyptian representatives a plan for restoring calm on the Nitzana border.
- 6 General Burns returned to Jerusalem from United Nations headquarters in New York.  
Minister of Finance makes public appeal for general wage freeze.
- 9 President Eisenhower stated that the United States did not intend to contribute to the arms race between Israel and Egypt.  
In a speech at the Guildhall Sir Anthony Eden called for a settlement on Arab-Israel dispute.  
Mr. Sharett arrived in New York on a fortnight's fund-raising visit.
- 15 Israel Prime Minister made statement in the Knesset in reply to the speech of Sir Anthony Eden at the Guildhall on November 9.
- 16 Israel Ambassador to the United States presented a list of arms required by Israel to Mr. Herbert Hoover, junior.
- 21 Israel Foreign Minister told General Burns that Israel agreed in principle to the United Nations Secretary-General's proposals for settlement of the Nitzana problem.
- 22 Contract signed in London for purchase by Israel of 250 Leyland "World-master" bus chassis worth about £600,000, to be delivered in 1956.
- 25 Further delivery of Ouragan aircraft from France.  
approx.

## December

- 5 Minister of Finance presented a £1.161 million supplementary budget to the Knesset.
- 6 Imperial War Graves Cemetery on Mount Scopus cleared of mines by a detachment of the Israel police force.
- 11 Israel army units raided Syrian gun positions on the north-eastern shore of Lake Kinneret, causing heavy casualties.
- 14 United Nations General Assembly adopted an Israel resolution asking all Governments to take the necessary measures to avoid recurrence of attacks on civilian aircraft innocently straying across international frontiers.  
Mr. Sharett after discussions with Mr. Dulles, left New York for Europe and Israel.
- 16 Security Council convened to consider Syria's complaint against Israel for the Kinneret action on December 11.
- 19 Israel submitted a "peace plan" to the State Department.  
Sharett returned to Israel.
- 20 Israel published Syrian documents seized during the Kinneret raid.



VR 2181/6

No. 4

## WAGES IN ISRAEL: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received March 3)

(No. 31. Confidential)  
Sir,Tel Aviv,  
February 28, 1956.

It is not surprising that some atavistic traits of human nature should eventually reassert themselves amid the welter of different idealisms in which the State of Israel was founded. One of these idealisms, now under attack, was the principle (carried to its highest expression in the agricultural kibbutz movement) that all Israelis are equal and that no unavoidable concession should be made to the possibility that some may be more equal than others. The same principle gave rise to a belief, still intact in the kibbutz movement, that labour should as far as possible be paid for not in cash but in kind. Moreover, the attempt made by the early Zionists to win the Jew away from his traditional role of middle-man and merchant and to glorify the dignity of manual labour was reflected in the new State not only in the wage structure but in a system of family allowances designed to give effect, on a rather narrow interpretation, to the principle of payment "to each according to his need."

2. As the State developed into something approaching normality, these principles gave rise to anomalies which began to impede economic and social progress. As a country with few natural resources, poor soil and no great reserves of manpower, Israel's future—as the late Dr. Weizmann so clearly recognised—depended largely upon scientific and technical development and orderly and efficient administration. Increasingly, however, the wage structure whose origins I have outlined above ran counter to such a development. Promising scientists, on completing their training in foreign countries, found it more profitable to seek employment there than to return to Israel. Senior civil servants began to realise that a dock labourer earned more than they did and found themselves unable to fulfil even the minimum social obligations of their posts. Workers with professional and academic qualifications found middle-class life in towns and cities insupportable on their traditional salaries. Over a long period the salaries of the professional classes had been set, with deference to the prevailing egalitarian ethos, at an exceptionally low level, and this had resulted in a differential between the rewards for skilled and unskilled work which has been claimed, probably with justice, to be the lowest in the world. This small margin, which was all that there was to raise the professional worker above the average level of subsistence, has, however, been still further whittled away during some years of inflation by the local practice of maintaining the real value of wages by a cost-of-living bonus which only operates up to a certain point. Beyond this point the salaried worker has had nothing to sustain the real value of his original differential.

3. The discontent among Israeli professional and academic workers came to a head last summer when a series of strikes and "go-slow" movements, reported in my despatch No. 113 of the 29th of August, 1955, led the Government to promise, in principle, to pay to senior civil servants about two-thirds of the salary increases recommended by an independent committee of enquiry which had been set up under the chairmanship of Mr. I. Guri. At the same time other professional workers obtained comparable increases. Although some matters of detail remained to be settled, the increases were paid, in some sense on an *ex gratia* basis, from the 1st of July last year. The success of the strikers was, however, short-lived. As the winter approached and the Government faced up to the implications of a burdensome arms race superimposed upon the inflationary situation reported in my despatch No. 155 of the 5th of December, it became more and more reluctant to carry out its promise for fear of setting off a cycle of wage increases among the working population generally, followed by increased costs, followed by increased cost-of-living allowances, and so on *ad infinitum*.

4. As agitation for a general wage increase grew in volume and vigour, the Government (or more accurately, the Minister of Finance and some of his colleagues) decided that it was more important to maintain the wage freeze than



to keep faith with the professional classes. The Minister of Finance, supported by the Governor of the Bank of Israel and other economists, roundly declared that any general wage increase would lead to inflation. He fought a stiff and courageous rearguard action but found himself unable to impose his policy either upon Mapai's coalition allies or upon the Political Committee of his own party, which was divided on the merits of the case. Undermined from within, the Government finally sought to compromise by conceding a small all-round increase to the working population, while announcing that the increases promised to the professional classes could not be paid in full in 1956. This decision was of course bitterly attacked by the Right-wing Opposition, while the small Communist Party (scenting an opportunity to cause trouble for the Histadrut) likewise announced its support for the professionals. Within the coalition Achdut Avoda, after some initial hesitation, aligned itself with Mapai, while Mapam, for purely tactical ends, demanded a large all-round increase for everyone, including the professionals. The Progressives alone supported the latter to the point of withdrawing from the coalition when it became clear that the Government had no intention, except under extreme duress, of honouring its promise.

5. In an attempt to provide the Government with the necessary incentive for keeping its word, the professional classes, led by the State-employed doctors and supported to a considerable extent by engineers, academic workers and civil servants, decided early in February to embark upon strike action. The course of the strike and the partial victory of the strikers were described in my Chancery's letters 1011/56 of the 13th of February and the 20th of February, and call for no further comment here. Suffice it to say that, after many desperate twists and turns, the Government finally conceded the greater part of the strikers' demands. This, however, is very far from being the end of the story. In the first place, the justifiable claims of the professional workers were, as I have said, used to promote a more tenuous claim to an increase for the whole of the rest of the employed population. When the Histadrut Executive Committee decided on the 12th of January that their wage policy for 1956 would be a minimum all-round increase of 5 per cent. (see my Chancery's letter 1103/56 of the 23rd of January), no settlement with the professional classes was in sight. It is more than likely that, when the Histadrut comes to work out in detail the 5 per cent. rise to which it is committed, it will find itself under irresistible pressure to step up its demands. In any case, any general increase is bound to aggravate the already difficult problem of export costs and subsidies and to increase inflationary pressures. Secondly, the Government's decision to concede, against its better judgment, a general wage increase was a striking demonstration of the fact that the Histadrut, led though it is by devoted members of the dominant party, Mapai, does not always see eye to eye with the party chiefs and can, with sufficient support from within the party, call a tune to which the Government must dance. Thirdly, the professionals, whose organisations were all affiliated to the Histadrut, have demonstrated that they are in a position to protect their own interests against the opposition of the Histadrut and with only a makeshift organisation behind them. The lesson can hardly fail to be lost on every component of the Histadrut. Finally, the withdrawal from the coalition of the Progressive Party, with their single representative in the Cabinet, in defence of a principle to which they were committed, followed by their decision to return to the coalition when they felt that the principle had been adequately safeguarded, has brought out into the open the basic weakness of the coalition. When I asked the Foreign Minister whether he regarded the resignation of Dr. Rosen from the Cabinet as a significant political event, he replied that it was indeed very serious, because it would serve as a most unwelcome reminder to the other minority parties of the extent to which they could force the hand of Mapai if they chose to do so.

6. The moral of all these events is, I think, pretty clear. That the professional classes were grossly underpaid and that this was impeding their usefulness to the State was pretty generally recognised a year or more ago. Had the Government taken the bull by the horns and, without evasions or tergiversations, swiftly granted the increases of pay recommended by the Independent Committee, all would have been well. In the event, the ideologies in which the Mapai leaders had been brought up made it too difficult for them to concede an improvement in the relative position of the professional classes; and they embarked on a series of undignified and at times distasteful manoeuvres to avoid doing so. In the face of unexpectedly

strong and well-organised opposition, they retreated step by step from an untenable position, but their successive concessions were too little and came too late. Though the final solution saved the Government's face, it was in all essentials a victory for the strikers; and the repercussions will be felt for a long time.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.



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VR 1073/95G

No. 5

**RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND Mr. NEHRU AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE, DELHI, ON  
MARCH 4, 1956, FROM 3 P.M. TO 6 P.M.**

**Arab/Israel Dispute**

*The Secretary of State* explained that until recently he had thought that there was a serious risk of an attack by Israel from March onwards. The danger was still grave but Colonel Nasser seemed to have formed the impression that the risks had now become less acute.

In response to a question from Mr. Nehru about the Johnston Plan, the *Secretary of State* explained the present difficulties about putting it into effect. He also outlined the ideas regarding a settlement which Colonel Nasser had put to him. He was well aware, however, that when he went to Israel he would probably be given a set of completely irreconcilable demands. The present situation was not only very difficult to solve but seemed in some respects even more dangerous than Indo-China had been while the fighting was going on, chiefly because war was logistically so much easier in the Middle East.

*Mr. Nehru* commented that all these local problems were dependent upon relations between the Great Powers. Unless some progress could be made towards understanding among the Powers, the local problems would continue to grow and the Soviet Union was geographically in a favourable position to exploit them.

*The Secretary of State* commented that we considered the Soviet arms deal with Egypt had been a grave act, which had greatly added to tension between Israelis and Arabs. It had undoubtedly been planned a long time before. The Russians were also moving in on the African countries, establishing Embassies with large staffs.

*Mr. Nehru* commented that, so long as both sides were playing the game of seeking to undermine each other, one must expect such moves from the Soviet side. Soviet actions such as the arms deal were moves in a bigger game; the Russians were not much interested in the Arabs or the Israelis as such.

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No. 6

VR 1091/48

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND MR. MEIRU AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE, TEL AVIV  
MARCH 4 1956 FROM 3 P.M. TO 4 P.M.

Unpublished Document

The Secretary of State explained that he had recently been through the time  
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only very difficult to solve but seemed to have become even more dangerous than  
Israel's position had been while the British were in the Middle East. It was  
logically so much easier in the Middle East.

Mr. Meiru explained that all these facts were dependent upon  
relations between the Arab States. He also explained that the present situation  
understanding the present situation, the present situation would continue to grow and  
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The Secretary of State commented that he was aware of the Soviet Union's  
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Israel and Arab States. It had undoubtedly been a long time before. The  
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Mr. Meiru explained that he was aware of the Soviet Union's  
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Soviet Union was geographically in a position to exploit them. The Russian  
were not much interested in the Arab States in the Middle East.

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VR 1091/48

No. 6

# SURVEY OF ISRAEL'S ARMED STRENGTH AND MILITARY THINKING

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received March 14)

(No. 37. Secret)  
Sir,

Tel Aviv,  
March 10, 1956.

The three armed services of Israel have been the subject of my despatches  
No. 6 and No. 11 of the 13th and 21st of January, and No. 144 of the  
14th of November, 1955. Each service individually is probably the best in its  
element, in quality though not in quantity, in the Middle East. Nevertheless there  
has been a widespread feeling among Israelis that their defence is in jeopardy and  
that they must be permitted to buy equipment at least as good in any category as  
that held by their prospective opponents. Any suggestion that this would in  
practice aggravate their political difficulties without, in the long run, improving  
their military position *vis-à-vis* their opponents, and that they must rely on outside  
help to make good the deficit simply does not carry conviction. This state of mind  
is in part a deliberate creation of the Government of Israel but it also corresponds  
in part to the real facts of the predicament in which Israel now finds itself.

2. Although open warfare is not perhaps any more intrinsically probable  
between Israel and the Arab States than it is between the Soviet Union and the  
West, the balance of armed strength in the Middle East has a constant bearing upon  
the power and prestige of the protagonists and thus upon the problems of the type  
of "limited" war which is always threatening on Israel's borders. It may  
therefore be appropriate first of all to discuss the capacity of the Israeli Defence  
Force in the event of a "hot" war before passing on to consider more normal  
conditions.

3. In terms of "hot" war Israel, by all the facts of geography, should be  
completely indefensible, on land, sea or air, against the combined power of the  
Arab States if this were efficiently brought to bear. Israel has land frontiers of  
49 miles with Lebanon, 47 miles with Syria, 330 miles with Jordan and 165 miles  
with Egypt. The size of the active Israeli army is approximately the size of the  
British force which defended the 22-mile perimeter of Tobruk in the last war and  
the size of the active and reserve armies together is approximately the size of the  
combined British and American forces which defended the slightly larger perimeter  
at Anzio. The land forces which the Arab States could put into the field against  
them are by now better armed and certainly not inferior in numbers, indeed, their  
regular forces approximately match Israel's active and reserve armies together.  
Israel's army is thus faced—on paper at least—with a hopeless task in trying to  
defend nearly 600 miles of frontier unless it can attack and destroy one or more of  
its enemies and then turn upon the others. But to be certain of attacking  
successfully is generally held to require either a 3:1 advantage in concentration  
of forces at the selected point of attack, or, if fighting against equal or superior  
numbers, an exceptional advantage in equipment and morale. Failing any of these  
the quality of leadership might be such that it gave a fair promise of gaining the  
same ends by tactical surprise but it is not easy for a nation to be reduced to relying  
upon anything so uncertain for its continued existence. In these circumstances the  
Israeli army is bound to pay particular attention to equipment and to morale (which  
in some measure depends upon equipment).

4. The air defence problem is equally intractable. Any part of the country  
can be reached from "hostile" territory by a jet aircraft in a matter of tens of  
seconds or at most in a few hundreds of seconds. Some interceptions might be  
achieved by flying airborne early warning patrols, as an aircraft carrier does at sea,  
in order to extend the range of radar warning but not to any effect if enemy bombers  
can fly higher and faster than the defending fighters. This therefore is also an  
element in which quality becomes of supreme importance and where the capacity  
to attack enemy airfields is a prime means of defence.

5. Although naval problems are less important to Israel she could not afford  
to allow control of her coastal waters to pass to other hands. She would be gravely  
embarrassed within a short time by an effective blockade and, if war continued for



more than a matter of a few months, could probably be brought to her knees by submarine warfare and the mining of coastal waters.

6. The forces available to meet this strategic problem are described in an Annex<sup>(1)</sup> to this despatch. Though large in proportion to the population of the country, well-organised, well-led and inspired by a fanatical devotion, they are in terms of armament and equipment not capable of conducting a prolonged campaign against the forces which the Arab States are, in theory, capable of putting into the field against them. All available manpower is already committed in one way or another to defence; there is no untapped source which can be drawn upon if the Arab States increase their regular forces or create reserve armies, and Israel's geographical configuration renders her peculiarly liable to be overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers.

7. Since it would be militarily such an easy matter to destroy Israel it is vital to her continued existence that the Arab countries should never conceive of her destruction as a practical possibility. Once this occurred the necessary co-ordination and training might be set on foot with incalculable consequences. It therefore follows in Israeli eyes that no Arab country must ever be allowed to obtain a temporary moral or material superiority which might lead them to translate their dream of destroying Israel into terms of a practical and realisable ambition. The Western concept of a balance of power in which Israel with the help of the tripartite Powers would have nothing to fear from the Arab States is anathema to Israel. It presupposes an admission of Israeli inferiority which, in their eyes, would mean that the fatal rot had set in. Their conviction on this point is reinforced by the belief that, in practice, military assistance from the West would not be forthcoming or at least would arrive too late, and that the Arabs know this.

8. The same moral ascendancy is also to Israeli eyes an essential ingredient of their border policy. The scale of the problem is illustrated by figures of Israeli casualties quoted by the Israeli Prime Minister in the Knesset on January 2: in 1951, 137; in 1952, 147; in 1953, 162; in 1954, 180; in 1955, 258. Again I believe that the key to the Israeli attitude is a consciousness of their vulnerability to this form of "limited" attack. The length of the frontier has already been mentioned. This makes interception on the border extremely difficult. Even if the army were to be diverted from normal peacetime training for defence tasks and devoted solely to the desert and mountain equivalent of jungle-bashing the task would still not be easy. But once an infiltrator has crossed the border into an inhabited area the task of interception becomes virtually impossible. Once inside the country an infiltrator need expect no serious difficulty in passing himself off as an Israeli Arab or as a Jew from an Arab country. The Israelis have therefore resigned themselves to a philosophy of border control which holds that only the Government and people of the Arab country concerned can prevent an infiltrator from coming over into Israel on a foray and since both Arab Governments and Arab people are inclined to regard a foray into Israel as a meritorious act the only possible deterrent is fear of the consequences. For lack of effective support in the Security Council or by the Tripartite Powers the Israelis see this deterrent power as lying in their own hands only. Nor has it been entirely ineffective in the short term. But it is an essential basis of police action against criminals that the police should not have their hands tied by public opinion and that in the last resort the criminals should not be better armed and more powerful than the police. If I may apply this metaphor to Israel neither of these preconditions for successful police action any longer holds good. Firstly Israeli methods have not received public support in the rest of the world and as a result Israel's hands have become more and more tied, especially by the United Nations Security Council resolution on January 19, on the Lake Tiberias incident. Secondly the balance of power is shifting so that if it comes to a showdown the time is approaching when there will no longer be any assurance that the policeman will win.

9. Very little infiltration is in fact going on at present but, if anything, this confirms that infiltration is less and less the spontaneous action of a dispossessed refugee and more and more a disgraceful act of State.

10. The ultimate fear of the Israelis, and it has been confirmed recently in conversation by the Israel Director of Military Intelligence, is that when Egypt considers the time is ripe she will gradually goad Israel into "police" actions which

<sup>(1)</sup> Not printed.

could either progressively destroy the remains of Israel's moral case until she stood completely isolated or become the signal for general fighting. In the latter case the Tripartite Powers might be either "unfairly" on the side of the Arabs or thrown into such confusion by the absence of a clear cut issue that they would fail to come to Israel's assistance in time. The Israelis point out that the advent of jet bombing aircraft to the theatre has made the time factor very important.

11. For all these reasons the Israelis cannot, as I have said, acquiesce in the suggested solution of allowing the Arabs to maintain a local ascendancy balanced from the outside by the Tripartite Powers. The arguments advanced in favour of this solution as I understand them are that:—

- (a) the supply of adequate arms to Israel would cause irreparable harm to our much more important relations with the Arab States; if Israel were adequately armed, she might attack; the British forces in the area must not be qualitatively inferior to those of Israel in case they had to be used against Israel under the Tripartite Declaration or for the defence of Jordan;
- (b) if Israel were supplied with adequate arms, the Egyptians and perhaps other Arab States would look to the Soviet Union for additional supplies, thus enabling the latter to secure a dominant position in them.

12. If these arguments are valid, there is no way of reconciling our present policy with Israel's conviction that peace in the area can only be ensured by allowing her to obtain sufficient arms of sufficient quality to maintain her now precarious moral superiority. In short, a settlement of the whole Arab-Israel dispute is the only solution to this political and military dilemma.

13. Even in negotiation for a settlement the Israelis would still, I am sure, retain their belief that Arabs and Arab Governments only respond to force or a threat of force. One of the roles of the Israeli Defence Force is to create a position of strength from which the Israeli Government could afford to try to negotiate an acceptable settlement. I have little doubt that this has been an important factor in the persistent Israeli cry for arms—as, indeed, it has presumably been in the reluctance of the Western Powers to supply them.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Bagdad, Beirut, Paris and Washington and to the Political Officer, Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.



VR 1073/105G

No. 7

**RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER IN JERUSALEM ON  
MARCH 13, 1956**

Present:

The Secretary of State.  
Sir J. Nicholls.  
Sir H. Caccia.  
Mr. Hancock.

Mr. Ben-Gurion.  
Mr. Sharett.  
Dr. Eytan.  
Mr. Schneerson.  
Mr. Kollek.

*Mr. Ben-Gurion* welcomed the Secretary of State as the first British Foreign Secretary ever to visit Israel.

*The Secretary of State* then briefly reviewed the situation in the Arab countries. He concluded that elements of domestic instability were present in all of them. The dispute between Israel and the Arab countries added a further major unsettling factor. The Soviet intervention, exemplified by the Egyptian-Czech arms deal, had brought about a change of the first importance. In this situation, it was difficult to play the hand so that the weak countries of the area did not fall a prey to Soviet Russia. Britain had many interests in the area, of which the chief was to see that oil supplies from the Persian Gulf were maintained.

*Mr. Ben-Gurion* replied that, whereas it was natural for the British to see Israel in the context of Middle Eastern problems, the Israelis themselves thought of Israel as a world problem, seeing that there were Jews all over the world and that Jewry was a spiritual and cultural influence everywhere.

Unfortunately, the immediate problems of Israel were Middle Eastern problems. The great danger to Israel was that Russia was using Egypt as a stalking horse. The danger from Russia was a danger not only to the Middle East but also to Africa. *Mr. Ben-Gurion* did not consider that Colonel Nasser was a Communist. He was only an imperialist. His philosophy now was the same as what he had outlined in his pamphlet "Philosophy of the Revolution." Colonel Nasser might have chosen the method of building up the Egyptian economy over a long period and ameliorating the lot of the Fellahin. But he had chosen to take the short cut of using Russian help. He now required, in order to keep up his prestige, not only in Egypt but in the Arab world as a whole, to eliminate Israel. Thus it was that Nasser was the key to Soviet penetration. A beginning had been made in Jordan. *Mr. Ben-Gurion* thought that a Junta of young officers might assume power before long. If Jordan was won, Iraq would be next. *Mr. Ben-Gurion* thought that it would be easy enough to assassinate Nuri. Africa would come later. *Mr. Ben-Gurion* thought that Africa would be more susceptible to Communist influence than Asia had been.

*Mr. Ben-Gurion* said that Colonel Nasser, being a dictator, was not his own master. He did not see how Colonel Nasser could avoid a conflict with Israel. Colonel Nasser respected the capacity of the Israeli army. But he had received some 200 MIGs and some 60 ILs. His trainees were already in Czechoslovakia and Poland in hundreds. His military superiority, in fact, was overwhelming and he could be expected to strike against Israel soon.

*The Secretary of State* asked how soon. *Mr. Ben-Gurion* replied that he thought it would be in two, three or four months. Only one thing could prevent Nasser from beginning a war, namely action on the part of the Western Powers to redress the balance of armaments in Israel's favour. The Israeli Government, who would never themselves undertake a preventive war, did not require absolute parity, but only a sufficient quantity of arms to act as a deterrent against Egyptian aggression.



It had been said that Israel must rely for protection upon the Tripartite Declaration, but Mr. Ben-Gurion could place no reliance at all upon it because, if Israel were attacked, neither Britain nor America could move with sufficient rapidity. Ten minutes would suffice for the Egyptian bombers to destroy Tel Aviv. Nor was Mr. Ben-Gurion at all certain that Britain and America would ever come in on Israel's side. He believed that they might well be deterred by the danger of Soviet intervention.

Mr. Ben-Gurion concluded by saying that, if Britain and America continued in their present policy, they would be held responsible before history for the coming war. All Israel wanted and needed was peace.

*The Secretary of State* asked whether, if the Western Powers were now to supply Israel with what she considered a sufficient quantity of defensive arms, would not the result be a further Egyptian application for Russian arms followed by the supply of Russian arms to the other Arab States. In that case, would Israel not end by being faced with the more critical situation of a ring of States round her borders armed with Soviet arms and probably with Soviet technicians.

Mr. Ben-Gurion said that this reasoning was fallacious. Of the Arab countries, only Egypt could fight Israel. For the next five or ten years, Egyptian capacity had a limit. Ninety per cent. of the recruits to the Egyptian army were unhealthy, illiterate or both. Thus there was a serious lack of technicians. Egypt already had more equipment than she could use effectively. Israel had as many able-bodied and educated soldiers as Egypt.

*The Secretary of State* said that he did not see why the Russians should not send technicians. They had plenty of them in readiness, including Arabic speakers. In this situation, he still thought that Israel's best defence lay in the deterrent of the Tripartite Declaration.

Mr. Sharett then developed his reasons for considering the Tripartite Declaration inadequate. First, it did not confer a contractual obligation. If Britain failed to apply the Declaration, she would not be involved in a breach of faith. Second, the situation had been changed by the Soviet intervention. The Soviet Government had themselves said that they would not remain indifferent if the Western Powers intervened in the Middle East. Mr. Sharett feared that the Western Powers would not act because they feared a global war. Third, Colonel Nasser would no doubt choose to adopt tactics designed to avoid raising a *casus foederis*. The Egyptians could infiltrate parties of saboteurs or assassins into Israel. If the Israelis reacted with military force, they would themselves appear to be the aggressors.

*The Secretary of State* said that the Tripartite Declaration meant exactly what it said and the United Kingdom meant to honour it. This was also the American intention, as had been apparent in the Washington discussions. As to Soviet military action in the Middle East, the Secretary of State thought that the logistic difficulties would be overwhelming. As to the difficulties of a confused situation, without certainty as to which side was responsible for aggression, the Secretary of State thought that the remedy was to improve conditions along the border, perhaps increasing the number of United Nations personnel.

Mr. Ben-Gurion then intervened to complain that Britain and America had been unwilling to make a Treaty with Israel, and yet the United States Government had entered into a treaty committing themselves to fight Communist China in respect of Formosa. Mr. Ben-Gurion asked whether it was possible in this situation for Israel to take the Tripartite Declaration seriously. In any case, it was a principle arising out of the Tripartite Declaration that both sides should receive equal treatment. But they had not received such treatment.

*The Secretary of State* said that the plain fact was that in present circumstances Israel was a military match for the Arab States. He then pointed out the strength of the British and United States forces in the area, and the weakness of Egypt's strategic position. He doubted whether Nasser, vulnerable as he was to British and American forces already in the Middle Eastern area, would gamble on anything which might be considered aggression and expose him to those forces.

Mr. Ben-Gurion agreed that Israel might win if there was a conflict now. But he asked what would be the price of such a victory. He also asked why British or

American soldiers should be expected to die for Israel. All that Israel needed was a sufficient quantity of defensive arms now.

In reply to a question from the Secretary of State, Mr. Ben-Gurion said that in his view there was no immediate prospect of an Arab/Israel settlement. Provided that war could be avoided, there was a distant prospect.

*The Secretary of State* said that he understood the Israeli anxieties about Egyptian intentions. But in Israel's own interest, it was necessary to avoid anything which might consolidate Arab unity. To supply a considerable number of arms to Israel would do just that. Our present aim ought to be to diminish Egyptian influence.

Mr. Ben-Gurion said that Nasser was not Egypt. Nasser ought to be faced with a clear choice by the Western Powers. They should ask him to choose between themselves and Russia. At present, Nasser was having the best of both worlds, playing the Western Powers off against the Soviet Union.

*The Secretary of State* raised the question of an extension of United Nations activity along the demarcation line.

Mr. Ben-Gurion said he did not see how even a considerable increase of United Nations personnel could prevent infiltration into Israel by small groups of terrorists. The Israeli Army themselves were unable to prevent such infiltration. Nor did Mr. Ben-Gurion think that physical demarcation, e.g., barbed wire, would be of much use. The demilitarised zones had been a source of constant confusion and uncertainty as to responsibility. What kept a frontier quiet was the presence of adequate forces in the vicinity. Thus the Israel/Jordan border had been kept quiet because the Arab Legion was in Jordan. Since Glubb's dismissal incidents on the Jordan frontier had begun. A physical barrier with patrols synchronised by each side had been suggested. But such an arrangement depended on the agreement of both sides. When the Israelis had made such a proposal in respect of the Gaza strip, the Egyptians had been unwilling to work with them.

Mr. Ben-Gurion then referred to the Secretary of State's suggestion that there might be a withdrawal on each side of the line. Colonel Nasser could accept such a proposal. His country was so large that a slight loss of ground was a matter of indifference to him. Israel, on the other hand, was so small that a withdrawal of even half a kilometre would considerably diminish her area. In any case, cultivation was carried on right up to the demarcation line. Mr. Ben-Gurion concluded by saying that he did not think that even an increase in the United Nations observers now at the disposal of General Burns would be useful since, if there was aggression, that could be determined by the observers already on the ground.

*The Secretary of State* asked what contribution Israel would be ready to make to a settlement with the Arab States.

Mr. Ben-Gurion replied that, as regards territory, Israel was a State of less than 8,000 square miles. She could not yield one inch.

As to Jerusalem, it had been the Jewish capital for 3,000 years and would remain so. It must be eliminated from any contribution.

As to refugees, there could be Israeli assistance in their resettlement. But the admission of increased numbers of refugees into Israel could be "symbolic." *The Secretary of State* asked if this meant that 10 per cent. of the refugees could be admitted. Mr. Ben-Gurion said the amount must be much less. There could be a widening of the present family reunion scheme. There could be no readmission of new Arab families.

For the rest, Israel would hope to assist a settlement with the Arabs by helping the Arab States to combat poverty and illiteracy and offering trade and transit facilities, provided that these were reciprocal.

Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Sharett concluded their exposition of the contribution which Israel might make to a settlement by contending that the first step must be to enter into negotiations with their Arab neighbours. Israel's terms could not be stated in advance and peace could not be bought by preliminary offers.



VR 1421/54

No. 8

# RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND MR. SHARETT ON MARCH 14, 1956

When Mr. Sharett came to see me off at the Airport, I said to him that there was one topic which there had not been time to mention the evening before, the commencement by the Israelis to dig the canal. I said that he would probably have gathered from my conversation the previous night that I thought that the present time was one of extreme delicacy in Middle Eastern developments. Therefore it was of the highest importance that Israel should not prejudice her own interests by taking any initiative which would be the subject of outside criticism, such as reprisals or beginning to dig the canal. Mr. Sharett did not reply to my remark about reprisals. With regard to the digging of the canal he said they could not afford to lose another season. I said how long would the digging take when they began it. He said a few weeks. I asked how long the digging season went on, and he said until August, he thought. I said in that case there was no urgency about beginning the work. He said that they had no intention of beginning the work in the immediate future. I again asked him to be extremely cautious and go very carefully, not making things more difficult by any unilateral action on the part of Israel.

Mr. Sharett then said that he had been thinking over what I had said about Syria the night before. I had referred to its instability. He had wondered whether a change in the régime there was possible. If so, he thought he ought to make it quite clear that Israel could not tolerate a union between Syria and Iraq, unless it was accompanied by a definite peace settlement. I was vague about a change in the régime, and said that if there were to be one I should have doubted whether it should take the form of the annexation of Syria by Iraq.



VR 1051/8

No. 9

**THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S VISIT TO ISRAEL,  
MARCH 13-14, 1956**

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received April 3)*

(No. 43. Confidential)  
Sir,

*Tel Aviv,  
March 24, 1956.*

A full account of your brief visit to Israel on the 13th and 14th of March is perhaps unnecessary, since there is little of political importance to record beyond your conversations, on the afternoon of your arrival, with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister—an account of which will already be available to you. Your visit was, however, the first paid to the State of Israel by a British Foreign Secretary and, quite apart from the pleasure it gave and the usefulness of the talks you had here, a brief account of your crowded programme and of the arrangements made for your visit may not be out of place.

2. I will not describe in detail the preliminary difficulties which arose over the question of your visiting Jerusalem. That the Government should have wished you to do so was natural; for, quite apart from considerations of their own *amour propre*, they would have been much criticised if they had allowed your visit to be confined to Tel Aviv. But, that point having been conceded, they might well have shown themselves more helpful about the details of your programme in Jerusalem. In the end your decision to follow the precedents set by Mr. Dulles in 1953 enabled these difficulties to be overcome without prejudice to our views on the status of Jerusalem. I suspect, however, that Mr. Sharett went through some uncomfortable moments before I was authorised to tell him, less than three days before the date set for your arrival, that you accepted the programme proposed for your visit to Jerusalem. It would be agreeable to think that by deciding on arrival to call on the President (a courtesy which was certainly much appreciated, and which the Israelis had not ventured to insist upon) you had heaped coals of fire on Mr. Sharett's head; but I fear that the saying has no relevance to modern Israel.

3. These preliminary troubles apart, it seemed to me that your visit was efficiently and agreeably handled on the Israel side. Mr. Sharett's presence at the airport to greet you (together with the French and United States Ambassadors, the Australian and Turkish Ministers and the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires) and the presence of a guard of honour lent a touch of formality to your arrival, but in general the arrangements made were pleasantly informal. Security arrangements were thorough but not—unless the acrobatic motor-cycle escort comes under this heading—unduly obtrusive. The Press, including a considerable number of visiting foreign correspondents, was kept well under control.

4. Your programme, which included a luncheon at my house attended by Mr. and Mrs. Sharett and General Burns among others, three hours on the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, two and a half hours of talks with the Prime Minister and Mr. Sharett, and a dinner and reception given by Mr. Sharett in your honour, was a strenuous and, I fear, an exhausting one. It was certainly too brief and too crowded to give you much opportunity of forming an impression of this strange land and people—though Mr. Ben-Gurion, with his battledress replacing the prophet's mantle and his conviction that what he wants is *ipso facto* right and reasonable, may well have given you as good an insight into the Israeli character as a longer stay and a wider range of contacts could have done.

5. Your visit came at a moment when the United Kingdom, after a period of unchallenged supremacy in terms of political unpopularity, was being rapidly overhauled by the United States. The process had not, however, gone so far as to make it easy for the Israel Government to detect traces of wisdom or friendliness towards Israel (the two are practically synonymous) in Her Majesty's Government's policy in the Middle East. The Government, in its advance publicity, was therefore careful to give the impression that it placed no great hopes upon your visit. Nevertheless, I think it did something to lessen their sense of isolation and to strengthen their belief—or rather, perhaps, reduce their disbelief—in the sincerity of our intentions. I fear that it did nothing to dispel the conviction which now

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obsesses all Israelis that arms from the West would prevent an Egyptian attack, block Colonel Nasser's imperial ambitions, limit Russia's opportunities for intrigue and subversion, safeguard the Western position in the Middle East and, generally, put the world to rights. Nor, I imagine, can your visit have increased your own hopes of finding, on the Israeli side, evidence of a realistic and conciliatory approach to the problem of an Arab-Israel settlement. Nothing in your conversation with Mr. Ben-Gurion brought home to me more clearly the difficulties in the way of such a settlement than the sincerity with which he told you that Israel's contribution to it—the only one—would be to place her experience in the settlement of immigrants at the disposal of the Arab States for the absorption of the refugees.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.

VR 1052/15G

No. 10

**CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE  
ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 6, 1956**

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir John Nicholls (Tel Aviv)*

(No. 66. Secret)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office,  
April 6, 1956.*

The Israeli Ambassador called on me to-day. After an exchange of courtesies about my visit to Palestine, the Ambassador said that his Government were puzzled and disturbed about what lay behind the fresh Egyptian aggressiveness in the Gaza area which had led up to yesterday's major incident. The Israelis did not want trouble at this time in view of the Secretary-General's impending visit to the Middle East. The recent incident in Gaza might have been engineered by the Egyptians in order to attract his attention to a particular situation and to take his eye off his main task which was to look at the situation as a whole.

2. Israeli policy at the moment was to give Nasser as little material as possible for improving his position with the other Arab States, as he invariably did after each clash with Israel. They also realised that they lost world support every time they retaliated. But there was a certain measure of self-preservation which must be maintained. Their only course was to be prepared, so that Nasser would think twice before launching an offensive. They had finally come to the conclusion that Nasser was an adventurer and a dangerous imperialist. Like us they had thought his interest was to build up internal peace and economic well-being. Presumably on the same assumption we had supported him, and rightly so. It now appeared that a logical view of Nasser's internal needs was no longer true. He overestimated his power and was drunk with success. What was needed now was a firm deterrent. The only deterrent that Israel could have was arms.

3. As far as the air was concerned, things were looking brighter. They were getting French Mystères and hoped to get some planes from Canada. They were also very grateful for our Meteor night fighters. What was really vital now was to deter Nasser on the ground and the only thing which would do this was Centurion tanks. The previous Israeli request had been for thirty, but they now wanted fifty.

4. Mr. Elath then developed the argument that to supply these tanks was in our interest since:—

- (a) the Egyptians would not dare to attack Israel if confronted with the same armour as they had;
- (b) at all costs the United Kingdom must prevent a war since we would be involved. We should therefore seek to provide every deterrent possible;
- (c) the psychological effect in Israel would be tremendous. Self-confidence would be restored and from self-confidence would come self-control;
- (d) there would be greater confidence in the United Kingdom and hence in the Tripartite Declaration.

5. A Palestine war would be a terrible dilemma for the United Kingdom. Only the Russians would benefit and be happy. He was therefore approaching me for the first time with some confidence, since a stage had been reached where Israeli and United Kingdom interests marched together.

6. I said that he would be glad to hear that we had agreed to release the Bofors guns he had been asking for and that we would look sympathetically at other orders, but Centurion tanks were a major question. I enquired about the position on anti-tank guns, but he brushed this aside to say that it was the psychological effect of Centurions which was the crux of the matter. I pointed out, however, that it was unlikely that the delivery of Centurion tanks would remain a secret for long. While possibly the effect on Egypt might be good, we had to think of the disastrous effect in places like Jordan and Iraq. I would, however, consider his request which would have to be discussed with my colleagues.

7. Mr. Elath then said that for the first time for a considerable period he felt he could talk about Middle East politics with me. Ninety per cent. of the Middle East, including people in Egypt, were against Nasser, but they were



frightened of him and needed a lead. Nuri was the only brave man in the Middle East and, although the Israelis realised he was their bitter enemy, they respected him as a patriot and a far-sighted statesman.

8. In Jordan there was a struggle for power going on. The main interest in Jordan was now not directed against Israel. In so far as the provision of Centurions to Israel was a slap in the face for Nasser, he thought that it would give encouragement to our friends in Jordan. Similarly, Nuri, though he would have to complain bitterly, would not really mind.

9. Jordan was the key to the situation in the Middle East. If peace could be brought about between Israel and Jordan, Iraq would follow. We would then have a secure line of communication from Haifa to the Iraq oil fields. There were many in Jordan who were interested in a settlement with Israel but they were frightened to move. He went on to develop the argument of the need for a settlement between Israel and Jordan at some length. Just before leaving, he said that Mr. Sharett had instructed him to ask whether the Meteor night fighters were the limit of our help to Israel. I said no, and gave the example of the Bofors guns.

10. He asked again for some assurance that we would look at Israel's arms requests sympathetically and especially the request for Centurions. I repeated that this was a matter which I should shortly be discussing with my colleagues.

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Amman, Ankara, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Paris and Washington, to the United Kingdom Representative to the United Nations at New York, to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Jerusalem and to the Head of the Political Office with Middle East Forces.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

VR 1074/155

No. 11

**CONVERSATION IN LONDON BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
ON APRIL 7, 1956**

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Pierson Dixon (New York)*

(No. 123. Secret)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office,  
April 7, 1956*

I had lunch at the airport with the Secretary-General of the United Nations when he passed through London to-day on his way to the Middle East to report on the Palestine problem in accordance with the United Nations Resolution of April 4.

2. I sought to impress on M. Hammarskjöld the urgency of his mission, the danger of being drawn into long-winded discussions of a final settlement and the necessity of making some radical proposals with regard to the future of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in order to both keep the peace and to sustain the prestige of the United Nations.

3. The following are the main points mentioned by M. Hammarskjöld in the course of our conversation.

4. *Headquarters.*—The Secretary-General said he intended to make his headquarters in Rome. But this was only because he must have a headquarters somewhere and was intended only as a façade. If things get worse in the Gaza strip, he will go to Cairo right away.

5. *Timing.*—He was in complete agreement about the urgency of the situation. If an attempt was made to procrastinate by starting long discussions about a future settlement, he would refuse to be drawn. If he could get agreement on any measures for keeping the peace he would announce them without delay and would not wait for his final report. He felt that the United Nations Resolution gave him complete discretion in this respect.

6. *Measures to keep the Peace.*—He entirely agreed on the need to give the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation a "new look" by extending its functions, facilities and numbers. Of these three the question of numbers was the least important. He proposed to confront the Israelis with the question: Do you want the Armistice Agreement kept? He felt that they were bound to say yes, and he would then indicate how this could be done. He hoped that in this way he might put them in a position where they could not refuse to accept his recommendations. It was clear that he expected most of his difficulties to come from the Israelis and not from the Arabs.

7. *Egypt.*—M. Hammarskjöld thought that Nasser was comparable with Hitler in 1935. He had a strong feeling that the Soviet Union did not wish Nasser to become too powerful. He had been very surprised when M. Sobolev had come to the airport in New York to see him off together with you and your French and American colleagues and representatives of other interested countries. He had been impressed by the general Arab resentment of Nasser's attempt to establish an Egyptian hegemony in the Middle East. The Syrians had made difficulties over the United Nations Resolution partly because they could not make out what the Egyptians were up to in accepting it so readily. M. Hammarskjöld said that he believed Syria had now reached quasi-satellite status.

8. *Incidents in Gaza.*—M. Hammarskjöld said that when discussing the recent Israeli attack in the Gaza strip Mr. Eban was more shame-faced than he had ever known him before.

9. *Jordan Waters.*—M. Hammarskjöld drew my attention to the importance of referring to the Jordan Waters Scheme and not to the "Johnston Plan," which was a very unpopular term with the Arabs. He said that M. Ammoun, the Lebanese Delegate to the United Nations, whom he described as the most effective of the







7. The position of President of the World Zionist Organisation has remained unfilled since the 22nd Congress, when Dr. Weitzmann resigned. Since then there have been two co-Chairmen. This year the various political groups managed to co-operate sufficiently to elect Dr. Nahum Goldman as President by a large majority. He will also be Chairman of the Jewish Agency. It has been said that Dr. Goldman had undertaken not to accept this position unless he had the support of all political groups including Herut. However, the Left wing refused to countenance any participation by Herut, even if it meant dropping support for Dr. Goldman who then had to choose between abandoning the Presidency or breaking his word. He chose the latter and thereby gained an interest in discrediting Herut which he did, it is said, by skilfully mismanaging the Hazan-Begin episode related in paragraph 4 above. Be that as it may, Herut were certainly thoroughly disgraced.

8. A Zionist General Council of 100 members which will meet in place of the Congress in 1957 and 1958, and a Jewish Agency Executive of 17 members was also elected. Mr. Zalman Shazar will be Chairman of the Executive in Jerusalem during the six months of each year which Dr. Goldman proposes to spend in New York. There is an unsettled dispute about who will be Chairman in New York, although it seems likely that Mrs. Rose Halprin will do it for the first year, and be followed by Dr. Emmanuel Newmann.

9. Underlying the discussions on immigration and many others were the yet unresolved problems of the World Zionist Organisation's proper aims and responsibilities, and hence organisational structure, now that the State of Israel has been established. The Congress does not seem to have contributed greatly to their solution, not least because of the almost ritual clash of personalities and parties. The controversy between Dr. Goldman and Mr. Locker, reported in my predecessor's despatch No. 144 of the 10th of August, 1954, about the duties of the Zionist, continued if not quite so openly. As before Dr. Goldman took the more moderate and realistic line that World Jewry must not be urged too hard to give more than moral and financial support to Israel and that those independent groups which have previously been repelled by party domination of the Movement should be encouraged to share in Zionist work. Dr. Goldman has the reorganisation of the Zionist Movement very much at heart—many already doubt, however, whether he has the power, even now, to accomplish it. The Government's view on the place of the Zionist Congress was made clear by Mr. Sharett. It was not a Court of Appeal from the Knesset, he said, nor even a Second Chamber. It boiled down to this: the advice, moral support and material help of World Zionism were crucial to the survival of Israel, but Israel was now a sovereign State whose decisions were final. The reconciliation of these facts in Zionist, and indeed Israeli, attitudes and policy is yet to be fully achieved.

I have, &c.

JOHN NICHOLLS.

VR 1192/11

No. 13

# NEW DEFENCE TAXES IN ISRAEL

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 18)

(No. 76. Confidential)

Tel Aviv,

June 14, 1956.

On the 22nd of May the Knesset passed a Defence Tax Law under which special direct and indirect taxes will be levied, the purpose of which is declared to be "to collect, together with the contributions made to the Defence Fund, a total of £1.75 million (£15 million sterling) for financing the acquisition of arms and equipment and for the construction of fortifications and shelters." The new law a synopsis of which is given in an annex to this despatch, will ostensibly operate for one year only but no doubt it will be re-enacted yearly so long as Arab-Israel tension is maintained.

2. The Defence Fund mentioned above stands at present about £4 million. This fund had interesting beginnings. Some months ago a reader of *Haboker* drew attention, in a letter to the editor, to the "voluntary" arms funds being created in Egypt and in Jordan. The reader sent £5 as a voluntary contribution for the purchase of arms, saying that he hoped others would follow his example. The newspaper thereupon set up its own fund and other newspapers soon followed suit. The movement spread and soon the Government decided to set up an official committee to organise a central fund. Local committees were appointed and various pressures, some unpleasant, began to be used to extort more and larger contributions. Where actual receipts were seen to be falling far short of "pledges," the committees took it upon themselves to fix the contribution from each resident in their area according to their estimation of his income. This was often unfair. I know of one workman, at the time unemployed, who was asked for £16. In one area a black list of non-contributors was published but this caused much indignation amongst Press and public and the practice was soon dropped. However, despite liberal use of all the customary instruments for instilling patriotic enthusiasm, including brass bands and boy scouts, the fund achieved rather less than £4 million of the £5 million originally aimed at.

3. Meanwhile the Government's target had risen to £15 million and the Knesset had authorised expenditure of this sum in anticipation of further contributions. It soon became clear, however, in spite of an appeal by the Prime Minister on the 3rd of January, that semi-voluntary contributions would not suffice and the Government consequently introduced a Bill designed to meet the deficit by a variety of new taxes. The Bill, which the Government hoped to pass through all its stages in one day, met with strong opposition. Some parties demanded that the measure be dropped completely, others asked for important concessions to be made to various elements of the population. A coalition crisis seemed likely at one time but was avoided in the end when Mapam and Achdut Avoda withdrew their objections. Nevertheless considerable changes in the Bill had to be made. Mr. Israel Guri, Chairman of the Finance Committee, said that as a result of the debate rates of both direct and indirect taxes had been cut to such an extent that only £7 million of the originally intended £11 million would be raised under the new law. For this reason he was sure that the Government would have to bring in another Bill in order to cover the difference of £4 million, the expenditure of which the Knesset was already bound to authorise. The vote on the Bill was 30 for, 2 against (Communists) and 11 abstentions (Herut and General Zionists).

4. The law provides for a special income tax which will apply to both employees and self-employed on the basis of their 1956 income. The latter will, however, make advance payments on the basis of their 1953 income. Some indication of the significance of the tax may be gathered from the following figures. A person who last year earned about £400 will pay about £15, one who earned £1,000, about £45, and one who earned £4,000, about £245. Certified donations to the Defence Fund will be deducted from these figures and those who paid their assessed "voluntary" contributions in full will receive a small rebate. No tax will be charged where last year's income was under £240 for a single man and £360 for a married couple with child. Allowances will be made for additional



children and for war disability. One interesting aspect of the law is that tax payers are able to appeal against their assessment before a Special Committee.

5. The indirect taxes apply mainly, but not entirely, to luxury goods and services. For example, most cinema prices, already very high in this film-addicted society, have been raised by about 25 per cent. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks alike are to be taxed more heavily as are cigarettes and tobacco, gas, electricity and telephone services. So are wirelesses and private cars including those already bought. The Government had hoped to exclude the new taxes from the calculations of the national cost-of-living index, but this proposal provoked such violent opposition that it had to be dropped.

6. The new law has been received with very little hostility, or indeed interest, by the general public, who seem to regard this latest burden as yet another unavoidable evil to which, in Israel's difficult situation, there is no alternative. Criticism has come mainly from those who believe that the measure will lead to still further claims for wage increases rather than to reduced consumption.

7. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Beirut and Washington, and to the Political Officer, Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

JOHN NICHOLLS.

VR 1015/17

No. 14

# RESIGNATION OF MR. SHARETT AS ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 25)*

(No. 84. Confidential)  
Sir,

*Tel Aviv,  
June 20, 1956.*

The resignation of Mr. Sharett, which I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 280 of the 18th of June, marks the end of an epoch in the brief history of modern Israel. Minister of Foreign Affairs since the inception of the State, and Prime Minister from January 1954 to November 1955, his record in the field of foreign affairs is in fact much longer; for he became head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department in 1933 and as such was the Agency's main channel of communication with the Government of Palestine and one of its principal spokesmen and negotiators in all its dealing with the outside world. His departure from the Government, in circumstances which were certainly peculiar and on the face of it distasteful, has thus come as a shock to most responsible Israelis, even though the intrigues which brought it about have been reflected in newspaper gossip for nearly a month.

2. The events which led up to Mr. Sharett's resignation are still somewhat obscure, and they are in any case of no great intrinsic importance. What is certain is that Mr. Ben Gurion was determined to get rid of him and that Mr. Sharett was determined to stay if he could muster enough support. It is fairly clear also that Mr. Ben Gurion, in order to achieve his object, resorted to a number of questionable practices, including the propagation of press reports and rumours that Mr. Sharett had agreed to resign long before he had in fact decided to do so. When the latter's position had been rendered sufficiently intolerable, the issue was submitted to the Mapai Central Committee where the voting is said to have been 35 for Mr. Sharett's resignation, 7 against and 45 abstentions.

3. That Mr. Sharett and Mr. Ben Gurion were uncongenial to each other has been obvious for many years, and, indeed, it would be strange if it were otherwise, for in character and temperament they are as unlike as any two men could be. Nevertheless they have worked together for twenty-five years, and there were many who thought, when the first reports of a crisis in

their relations were heard a few weeks ago, that only a sharp disagreement between them on some issue of current policy could explain the impending break-up of so long a partnership. Since Mr. Sharett is commonly identified with a policy of moderation, while Mr. Ben Gurion is usually classified as an activist, it was widely thought that the latter wished to rid himself of his Foreign Minister's restraining hand in order to embark on a more dynamic policy.

4. It is too early to say that these fears are groundless. My own belief, however, is that there was no specific cause of conflict. I would judge that Mr. Ben Gurion had for a long time been finding Mr. Sharett's cautious, balanced, temporising attitude and his infinite capacity for argument increasingly irksome; that he had been waiting for a suitable opportunity to get rid of him; and that he thought he had found such an opportunity in the conjunction of unrest within Mapai and the continued "failure" of Israeli foreign policy. I suspect that he misjudged Mr. Sharett's capacity to fight back and the amount of support he would be able to muster within the party, and that it was this miscalculation which produced the unedifying spectacle of a Prime Minister openly, though anonymously, intriguing for nearly a month to goad his principal lieutenant into resigning. My interpretation is not, I think, invalidated by the fact that it happens to accord fairly closely with the statement (of which I have the honour to enclose copies) in which Mr. Sharett explained his resignation to the Knesset.

5. If I am right in thinking that there was no immediate cause for the crisis in the form of a dispute between Ben Gurion the "activist" and Sharett the "moderate" on some current issue, it remains to consider whether Israeli foreign and defence policy will remain unchanged in practice. As I have reported in my telegram No. 284 of the 20th of June, Mr. Ben Gurion, replying for the Government in the debate on the Cabinet changes, has asserted that he stands by the "Basic Principles" laid down when the Coalition was formed and by his own



belief that "preventive war is madness." I believe that he resents the common belief that he is aggressive and impetuous, and that he will start his new régime of undivided control with a genuine determination to show that he is a man of peace. The fact remains, however, that he is by temperament tough, combative and uncompromising, and that one of the principal checks on ill-considered decisions has now been removed. Whereas Mr. Sharett was content to believe that he was always right by virtue of his superior intelligence, Mr. Ben Gurion—like so many of his compatriots—believes that he is always right by divine dispensation. Mrs. Myerson, an otherwise estimable and likeable woman, shares his belief and can certainly not be counted upon (unless I under-estimate the skill and persuasive powers of her officials at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) to exercise a moderating influence.

5. In these circumstances, though I should not expect any deliberate switch towards a more active policy, we must be prepared for certain unwelcome changes. In the first place, I think that the tone of official pronouncements on foreign policy and defence policy will become sharper and more uncompromising. Secondly, I think that in minor matters the Israeli Government will now show itself more unhelpful towards the Western Powers; difficulties may, for instance, be made about naval visits, and we are less likely now to make progress over blocked accounts and the Mount Scopus War Cemetery. Thirdly, I would expect to find a hardening of Israel's attitude towards the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation. Lastly, though I do not suggest that the danger is an imminent one, pressure to react against frontier incidents will, I fear, build up progressively, and may eventually, if there is serious or repeated provocation, endanger the cease-fire.

6. On all these counts Mr. Sharett's resignation is much to be regretted. Exasperating to deal with though he often was, his sympathies were wholly with the West and his inclination—which, admittedly, he sometimes successfully resisted—was always to reconcile differences and avoid or postpone decisive conflicts. At the best we may hope that his departure will change only the manner and not the content of Israeli foreign policy. At the worst it may prove to have marked a decisive stage in the fulfilment of the national tendency towards self-destruction.

7. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Bagdad, Cairo and Washington, to the Consul-General at Jerusalem and to the Political Officer with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

JOHN NICHOLLS.

Enclosure

*Mr. Sharett's Statement in the Knesset  
June 18, 1956*

I thank the Prime Minister for the words of appreciation which he has spoken of me to the Knesset. I wish to express my thanks to the Knesset for the measure of trust which it has accorded me during my period of office as Foreign Minister and for the attention and patience with which it has favoured me.

In connection with my resignation there have appeared some well-considered comments on the one hand, and much that is nonsensical on the other. In order to assist the members of the Knesset to discern between truth and falsehood, I wish to bring the following facts to the attention of the House.

In August 1955 after the last elections, when the present Prime Minister proceeded to form the new Cabinet, I asked him not to include me in the list of Ministers. I had well-founded reasons to fear that co-operation between my friend David Ben Gurion, as Prime Minister, and myself as Minister for Foreign Affairs would not be successful this time, and I believed it would be best for me to free him and the new Government from unnecessary complications.

The Prime Minister rejected my refusal to enter the Government, and in view of the attitude he then adopted I had to give way. In the course of my term of office in the present Government, co-operation between us was several times subject to most uneasy tests, which we managed to overcome by an effort to maintain a partnership which has continued between us for over two decades and in view of the emergency through which the country is passing.

But in recent weeks it has become clear to me that my resignation was unavoidable. This situation did not arise in connection with any pending political issue, or with any current event or incident. Nevertheless in

a frank conversation which I had with the Prime Minister on the evening of Sunday, June 3, I reached the absolute conviction that it was impossible for me to remain in the Government of which he is the head.

In the middle of that week I proposed to him that he should immediately convene an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet so that I could proffer my resignation. The Prime Minister urged me to postpone my resignation for a few weeks and he gave weighty reasons for his request. It was only a few days later that the Prime Minister realised that it would be better to avoid any further delay, whereupon we agreed on urgent arrangements for giving effect to the resignation.

This is in brief the true story. Any version or rumour or conjecture which has received publicity and which contradicts this story either in essentials or in any point of detail is pure fabrication.

I will not cheapen this forum or trouble the members of the Knesset with a detailed reply to the distortions and slanders which have appeared in the press.

I shall make but one exception. In one of the newspapers a most reprehensible attempt has been made to involve in this matter the senior officials of the Foreign Ministry, termed by that paper as the

"advisers to Foreign Minister." Again I do not propose to enter into the details of this worthless and mendacious gossip. I shall only say this:

I would wish for every Foreign Minister in Israel and indeed every other Minister, a staff of assistants such as I have had the privilege and the satisfaction of working with in the Foreign Ministry, both at home and abroad, whether from the point of view of training, political understanding, moral quality, capacity for work, devotion to duty as disciplined servants of the State and loyalty to Israel and to the Jewish people.

I have perhaps more than one reason to regret my having had to leave my post, but nothing causes me greater distress than the need to part from this fine team, to whom I have become so profoundly attached. With the permission of the Speaker and the House, I wish to express to them from this rostrum my deep gratitude for their devotion, assistance and friendship.

Members of the Knesset! I have many times mounted this tribune by virtue of the office which I held and which has terminated to-day. Permit me now to present myself in all humility as one of you, an elected representative of the people who will consider it a privilege to take part in the normal work of this House, unburdened by any governmental responsibility.



VR 1114/7

No. 15

## RELEASE OF ARAB REFUGEE BALANCES IN ISRAEL

*Mr. Westlake to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 28)*

(No. 124. Confidential)

Tel Aviv,

Sir,

August 23, 1956.

The arrangements inaugurated in March 1953 for the transfer to their owners of certain blocked balances held in Israel by Arab refugees, have now led to the transfer of cash and valuables worth more than £4,000,000 and very few accounts remain to be disposed of. This seems therefore to be an appropriate time to submit the following comprehensive account of these arrangements, which may prove useful for reference in connexion with any similar negotiations to protect the interests of Arab refugees which may be contemplated in the future. I am largely indebted to Mr. Higgins, Third Secretary at this Mission, for preparing the material for this despatch.

2. When the larger part of the Arab population of what is now Israel territory fled the country before and during the Arab-Israel war, many of them had no alternative but to leave behind varying amounts of money in bank balances and of securities and valuables, including jewellery, in safe deposits and lockers. These accounts and deposits were blocked by the Israel Government and they lay frozen in banks here until the release scheme was set in motion. The total value of these balances and valuables was probably between four and five million pounds.

3. The Israel Government were naturally not displeased to have a bargaining counter of this proportion in their hands and did not wish to waste it. Nevertheless, they had a difficult decision to make. On the one hand they were reluctant to transfer large amounts of money to States which were potential enemies and from whom they were already suffering the effects of economic blockade and they were also disinclined to release Arab balances unless Jewish balances in Iraq and elsewhere were also released. There was also considerable resistance on ideological grounds in this predominantly Socialist country to the idea of releasing balances belonging to wealthy Arab refugees who would, as likely as not, spend them in Paris or Deauville rather than in the Arab States where, at least indirectly, the poorer Arab refugees might profit from the transaction.

4. On the other hand, the Israel authorities were impressed by the arguments of the Western Powers that there might be some gain in removing at least one major grievance of the Arab refugee and also of their governments in the hope that this might lead to some relaxation of tension and to further concessions on both sides. Thus, in finally deciding to release these balances, Israel made a major concession to the Arab States in the hope of softening their attitude towards them. It was, at the very least, hoped to produce a softening of the attitude of the Western Powers towards Israel. For the most part, rightly or wrongly, the Israel Government consider that both hopes have been largely frustrated.

5. The release scheme first became a real possibility when the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations informed the Palestine Conciliation Commission on June 26, 1952, that his Government was willing to discuss means for the gradual release of accounts held by refugees in banks in Israel subject to the overall foreign exchange position of the country. As a result of discussions between the many interested parties, the Government of Israel announced on December 4, 1952, that they had decided to proceed with the gradual release of these accounts. The Israel authorities decided to give effect to this decision by making available a first instalment of £1,000,000 in foreign exchange and by transferring the first L.P.400 of each blocked Arab account at £1 to L.P.1, thus liquidating all the small accounts but doing very little towards liquidating the larger ones. For the purpose of the operation, which began on March 1, 1953, an Arab refugee was defined as one who—

- (a) was, on October 29, 1947, a permanent resident of those parts of Palestine which now form the territory of the State of Israel, and
- (b) left his place of habitual residence in the territory of the State of Israel before September 1, 1948.

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6. The releases under this scheme still leave blocked and open to further negotiation for transfer various accounts and claims by or on behalf of residents outside Israel, including Arabs, and not falling specifically within the scope of the United Kingdom-Israel Financial Agreement of March 30, 1950. These include: the proceeds of certain estates formerly held by the Palestine Administration General; claims against the Arab and Arab National Banks in liquidation; the proceeds of Palestine Bearer Bonds registered in Israel but now held by residents outside the country; and outstanding cheques drawn on Barclays Bank by the Palestine Citrus Marketing Board.

7. I have said above that the Israeli understanding to release the £1,000,000 was made in the hope that it would be evidence of Israel's willingness to make reasonable concessions to the Arabs. That it did not do so was partly the fault of the Arab States who in effect refused to assist in making the arrangements work. For a time the Syrians and Jordanians refused to allow the application forms across the border, the former on the ground that they contained Hebrew as well as Arabic writing. The Egyptian Government charged duty on the forms and the Lebanese considered passing a law forbidding claimants to sign them. There appears to have been general political agitation against the scheme in all the Arab States. On the other hand the Israelis handled the arrangements less wisely than they might have done. In addition to the use of Hebrew in the application forms they upset all the wealthier refugees by their limited initial release and by subsequently transferring all sums over L.P.500 to the Custodian of Absentee Property. It has been suggested that this latter step was due to the exceptional difficulties which the Israel Treasury was experiencing at the time. Unfortunately, the Israelis did not make clear that the transfer of the remaining Arab accounts from the Banks to the Custodian had no bearing on the Israel Government's eventual intentions concerning them and there was an implication that they might not be returned in advance of a general settlement. In June 1953, with the assistance of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, and after representations to Jordan by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Amman, some of these difficulties were overcome and the application form was revised. At the same time the Israel Government gave firm assurances that the release of amounts over L.P.500 would be in no way affected by their transfer to the Custodian.

8. Towards the end of 1953, in an interview with members of the foreign Press, Mr. Sharett, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that Israel had decided to release the £1,000,000 worth of Arab accounts since she had been informed "by certain authoritative quarters" that this would relax tension with the neighbouring countries. Mr. Sharett indicated that as there had not then been any sign of such a relaxation no decision had been made about any further instalments. Meanwhile actions had been brought in Jordan courts against Barclays Bank and the Ottoman Bank and as a result judgment had been brought against them under which the Banks would be required to pay out to refugees in Arab States sums totalling in all about £4,000,000 which had already been transferred to the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property. Her Majesty's Government did not consider that these judgments were well based in law and had little doubt that the courts had been politically influenced. Furthermore, the judgments upset a fundamental legal principle, on which overseas operations, banks and other trading corporations rely, namely that a branch at which an account is kept is the proper body to be sued for that account and is bound by the local law of the territory in which it is situated. In effect, Jordan was refusing to accept that Barclays Bank's branches in Israel were bound by Israeli law; which is not, of course, itself recognised by the Jordanians. In order to overcome the grave difficulties which these judgments caused, Her Majesty's Ambassador presented the Israel Government on December 31, 1953 with an *aide-memoire* which frankly stated Her Majesty's Government's difficulties and asked the Israel Government to release sufficient foreign exchange to enable the Banks to transfer all the outstanding balances to their owners. The Government of Israel replied that as only £700,000 of the first instalment of £1,000,000 had been claimed by Arab account holders, no further releases would be considered until the remainder was taken up. Furthermore, they argued that the first releases had not met with the favourable response from Arab States which had been expected, and that this first release had been in itself a very heavy financial burden upon Israel in view of continued Arab economic aggression. They said that Israel could hardly be expected to release further large sums of hard currency into the hands of States engaged in virtual warfare against Israel.

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9. In view of these difficulties, Barclays Bank and the Ottoman Bank explored the possibilities of offering to Israel a medium term loan of £3,000,000 which would be sufficient to allow the release of the remaining blocked accounts and hence satisfy the Jordan claims against the two banks. Such a loan was to be conditional on the release of the deposits. The proposal was put to the Israel Government by Messrs. R. D. Smith and G. F. Lewis of Barclays Bank, but at first they met with a very poor response. The Israelis did, however, suggest that they might be prepared to agree if an extra two or three million pounds sterling loan were added as a sweetener. At first Her Majesty's Government said that they would not be prepared to guarantee such an additional loan. However, after further skilful representations by Messrs. Smith and Lewis the Israel Government finally agreed to release the blocked balances in return for a £1,000,000 loan to them in addition to the £3,000,000 loan to cover the release of the blocked accounts. With almost admirable knavery the Israel Government then managed to squeeze another £1,000,000 loan for the Palestine Electric Corporation on the ground that this had been part of the agreement, as they had understood it, all along.

10. The announcement was made on September 26, 1954, that further releases of Arab balances would be made and soon the second stage of the release scheme was under way. Unfortunately the Arab reaction was only a little less hostile than before. The Israelis did not help by trying to turn the new agreement to their political advantage by attempting to secure a meeting with the representatives of the Arab account holders themselves. In this they were unsuccessful and the Palestine Conciliation Commission acted as intermediary.

11. The second and final stage of the scheme is now nearing completion. About £2,630,000 has now been paid over to Arab account holders out of the originally expected total of £3,000,000. Barclays Bank have at least tentatively agreed to grant an additional loan of £200,000 should this prove necessary, as seems likely, to enable the transfer of the remaining accounts. Of the 138 confiscated lockers containing securities and jewellery, 110 have been released. The value of the contents of these unopened lockers is unknown but may well be considerable. As the scheme has progressed the difficulties of identifying and tracing the remaining owners of accounts and lockers have naturally increased and the pace has therefore slowed. Barclays Bank are certain that the Israel Government is in no way interfering with the completion of the scheme. Broadly speaking almost all the accounts and lockers due to owners in the Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq have been transferred. (I have heard however that seven Iraqis have not had their accounts returned owing to the Israel authorities' exceptional, but so far undisclosed, political objections to them.) Most of the remaining accounts and lockers belong to persons in Egypt and Syria. Many of these have declined to apply for the return of their property owing to danger of interference if not confiscation by their Governments which remain hostile to the release scheme.

12. Despite the difficulties, it seems that within six months all but a few accounts and lockers will have been returned. The remaining few may take years to dispose of. As the scheme draws to a close the Israel Government will no doubt sum up, to themselves, the extent to which they have gained from their initiative. It would be hard to blame them for disappointment, and perhaps almost as hard to be surprised if they conclude that the gulf between themselves and the Arab States is too wide to be bridged by unilateral concessions of whatever size. For although Israel did get two loans of one million pounds as an inducement to enter upon the second stage of the release scheme, there can be no doubt that she was largely motivated by the desire to at least try to create a better atmosphere between her and the Arab States in which further concessions could be made. It is a great pity that her hopes have been disappointed.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Beirut, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Washington, Paris, to the Head of the United Kingdom Delegation at New York and to the Consul-General at Jerusalem.

I have, &amp;c.

P. A. G. WESTLAKE.

SECRET



VR 1015/24

No. 16

# REPORT ON THE EIGHTH CONVENTION OF MAPAI HELD AT TEL AVIV, AUGUST 26-31, 1956

*Mr Westlake to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received September 18)*

(No. 133. Confidential)  
Sir,

Tel Aviv,  
September 13, 1956.

I have the honour to report that the Eighth Convention of the Israel Labour Party (Mapai) opened in Tel Aviv on Sunday, the 26th of August, and closed early in the morning of the 31st of August.

2. In my despatch No. 123 of the 23rd of August I forwarded a report by the Labour Attaché on various problems of policy and leadership within Mapai which formed a background to the proceedings of the Convention. I commented that the main problem facing the party was to strengthen its support among the electorate and to formulate an economic policy. In the event, political issues, whether external or internal, played a minor part in the Convention and attention was concentrated on economic issues and on the question of party reorganisation, which appears to have been generally recognised as a prerequisite to recapturing the party's former widespread support among the electorate.

3. Mapai's leadership is so strong that they have been able to resist for six important years any pressure from the rank and file for a Convention to be held. The previous Convention was held in 1950. There is evidence, however, that Mr. Ben-Gurion and his supporters have recently come to feel that a party Convention would play a useful part in their campaign to gain more public support. Once it had been decided to hold the Convention the party leaders were able, owing to the unique position of Mapai in Israel, to make the Convention into something approaching a State occasion. All the leading personalities of the State were present from the President down, including all Cabinet Ministers, not only those of Mapai. It is unlikely that any other Israeli party could have staged so grand a show, yet such is the eminence and in a sense the respectability of Mapai that few, if any, voices have been raised to enquire why, for example, the President chose to be present.

4. The main feature of the opening of the Convention was a speech from Mr. Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, of which an account was given in my Chancery's letter 1015/56 of the 29th of August to Levant Department. The opening part of the speech was devoted to Israel's security problems and Israel-Arab relations and contained many of the usual assertions of independence and of confidence, mixed with appeals for greater support from world Jewry and for supplies of defensive arms from the West. I reported in my telegram No. 376 of the 27th of August the passages in which Mr. Ben-Gurion touched upon border incidents and the question of freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and in the Straits of Tiran at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba. Mr. Ben-Gurion said that if the United Nations authorities were helpless to prevent attacks against Israel's rights and the lives of her citizens, Israel must do so with her own hands and that until Israel's rights of free navigation were safeguarded, security and quiet would not be established in this region. It is significant that this attitude provoked no controversy whatsoever and it seems reasonable to conclude that it carried the wholehearted support of the Convention. In the remainder of his speech Mr. Ben-Gurion discussed party reorganisation and dealt in general terms with some aspects of the economic problems which were later to be taken up in detail by the Convention. It is interesting that he included in his speech an attack on the other labour parties in the coalition, Le'achdut Ha'avoda and Mapam. He complained that they had broken the unity of labour by fighting the elections as independent parties and by putting forward specious election programmes which they knew in advance they would not implement.

5. In view of Israel's urgent need for greater economic realism, the speech of Mr. Eshkol, Minister of Finance, on the second day was particularly refreshing. Admittedly he did not follow his detailed and realistic analysis of the economic position with any precise recommendations for economic policy, but it is surprising



that he was as frank as he was at a party Convention. He stressed Israel's present economic dependence upon payments from American Jewry and from Germany which, he said, paid for about three-quarters of Israel's present heavy import bill. When, in a few years, Israel could no longer depend on these foreign funds she would somehow have to close this wide gap by her own efforts. This would involve producing and exporting something like an extra \$300 million worth of goods a year by around 1960; but to export more she would have to produce more at lower prices. As a new entrant in a highly competitive field Israel's export price should be lower than average and not, as at present, higher. Lower prices could in turn only be achieved if there was general wage restraint, a decline in the rate of consumption, a reduction in unnecessary economic activities and higher productivity all round. He particularly stressed that there should be no wage increases which were not matched by increases in productivity. He went on to describe the inflationary effects and consequent general economic dangers of the present unreal link between wages and the cost-of-living index. (At present most wages paid in Israel are automatically increased at three-monthly intervals if the official cost-of-living index has risen more than three points in that period.) Mr. Eshkol proposed that this form of wage agreement should be abolished and that, instead, wage agreements covering a whole year should be negotiated annually and should be binding throughout that period.

6. When the delegates discussed the cost-of-living index, wide disagreements appeared. It was therefore creditable to the leadership that they managed to get a fairly firmly-worded resolution passed at the end of the Convention to the effect that consideration should be given to changing the present system.

7. The second main theme of the Convention concerned the constitution and size of the party's central committee. The steering committee, which was naturally packed with Mr. Ben-Gurion's supporters, proposed a committee of 223 members, but Mr. Sharett, the former Foreign Minister, gave support to two rather dissident groups within the Mapai Party who proposed a smaller and, they thought, more democratic committee. One of these groups is associated with Haifa's powerful mayor, Mr. Abba Khoushi, and the other is a group known as the "Young Turks" which mainly consists of minor officials who are always liable to make a certain amount of trouble for the leadership, not because they disagree over policy, but because they believe that their own political ambitions are being frustrated. By a narrow vote Mr. Sharett's proposal for a much smaller central committee was accepted by the Convention. The victory was short-lived because in the evening Mr. Ben-Gurion had the decision reversed after making a powerful and rather emotional speech in favour of a compromise proposal. Even then the matter was not ended because later the steering committee had to come back with yet another proposal when they discovered that Mr. Ben-Gurion's compromise proposal (for which they presumably were responsible) would not work out in practice. In brief, the commotion, for such it was, was mainly due to the ineptitude of the Convention Steering Committee, not to an open trial of strength between Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Sharett.

8. Mr. Sharett seems content to remain relatively politically unengaged at the present, leaving himself the maximum freedom of action. He has made no effort to become secretary-general of the party; indeed he has actively supported the candidature of Dr. Giora Josephthal, the able treasurer of the Jewish Agency Executive who is well known for his independent views. Dr. Josephthal has not yet been formally appointed but there is little doubt that he will be, or that he will do a good job.

9. The Convention ended, as almost all Conventions do, with the usual unanimous and near unanimous resolutions about all aspects of government and party policy. None of them, except the one about the cost-of-living index (see paragraph 6 above), are worth reporting in detail. What was important about the Convention was, first of all, the more democratic wind of criticism which blew throughout it (and it was by no means unwelcome to the leadership), the relatively minor role played by political issues, both external and internal, and the important role played by questions of economic policy and party organisation. It was also apparent that Mr. Sharett's prestige still runs high in the party. He remains the only clear rival to Mr. Ben-Gurion, though not by any means yet a dangerous one.

10. If I am right in suggesting that Mapai's main problem at the present time is to avoid a decline in popular support while carrying the responsibility for an unpopular economic policy, then the Mapai leadership should have left this Convention with a justifiable sense of achievement. The live issues were discussed and in a serious way. So far as a Convention can prepare a party for a tough time to come, this Convention did.

I have, &c.,

P. A. G. WESTLAKE.



VR 1022/17

No. 17

# REVIEW OF ISRAELI POLICY DURING THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1956, AND ASSESSMENT OF ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

*Mr. Westlake to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received September 24)*

(No. 136. Confidential) Tel Aviv,  
Sir, September 20, 1956.

It is now three months since Mrs. Golda Meir succeeded Mr. Sharett on the 18th of June as Mr. Ben-Gurion's Minister for Foreign Affairs and, although this change was not in itself of paramount importance, it may be useful to pass under review the performance of the new team during this eventful three months, with particular reference to developments in Israel's foreign policy.

2. Nearly two months out of the three have been overshadowed by the Suez Canal problem. The only public pronouncement of the Government upon this was contained in a speech by Mr. Ben-Gurion at the Israel Labour Party Convention (my telegram No. 376 of the 27th of August) in which he said that it was idle to suppose that Israel's navigation rights would automatically be safeguarded either in the Canal or in the Gulf of Aqaba and that the world must realise that, until these rights were safeguarded, security and quiet would not be established in this region. The same linking of the Suez Canal issue with the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba also occurred in the Israel Ambassador's first representations in London on the Suez issue on the 31st of July (your telegram No. 683) and in a description of Israeli policy given to the French Ambassador at Tel Aviv (my telegram No. 345 of the 4th of August).

3. Apart from these and other discreet efforts to ensure that Israel's interests are not lost sight of, the Government have been extremely cautious. They have not, so far at least, sought to inject the Arab-Israel dispute into the Suez crisis as they might easily have done. They could, for instance, with some justification have carried out a degree of mobilisation in the early stages of the dispute at a time when British forces in the Mediterranean were being reinforced, or they could have attempted to pass a blockade runner through the Suez Canal or through the Gulf of Aqaba. In displaying caution over the Suez issue, therefore, their conduct has met one of the two desiderata which you, Sir, put to the Israel Ambassador in London on the 8th of August when

you pointed out how important it was to Israel's interests, not only to keep out of the Suez Canal question, for the time being, but to exercise the greatest possible restraint during this time to keep the situation on the frontiers with her Arab neighbours quiet (your despatch No. 133). It is in the second of these desiderata that the Israelis have fallen short.

4. The Israeli attitude to border incidents was reiterated by Mrs. Meir in her first policy speech after assuming office. She said that Israel would not harm anyone provided that Israel was left in peace, but that acts of aggression had not been tolerated in the past and would not be tolerated in the future: Israel would never initiate border unrest herself. This is the traditional Israeli policy. Some improvement might have been expected from the cease-fire agreements negotiated at the end of April and in the early days of May by Mr. Hammarskjöld. But the interpretation of these agreements depended largely upon what was taken to constitute self-defence and it has become evident that the Israeli conception of self-defence is unchanged. As Mr. Ben-Gurion has put it on several occasions, "If the Armistice Lines are opened for the passage of saboteurs and murderers they will not remain closed to defenders. If our rights are encroached upon by acts of violence on land or at sea, we shall reserve our freedom of action to defend our rights in the most effective manner."

5. There is no doubt that this policy commands the overwhelming support of the population and that it is widely believed to be effective. Nor is it easy to demonstrate that it is not effective in the short term since it is all too often true that reprisals do have a temporary deterrent effect. It is probably equally true that they cast a malign influence in the long run upon Arab-Israel relations but faced with this dilemma the Government of Israel have normally preferred one bird in the hand to two in the bush and have authorised reprisals. Looking back over the record I doubt whether the present Cabinet has shown much difference in this predilection from any of its predecessors.



6. There appear, however, to have been some innovations in the application of this philosophy in practice. The widespread Egyptian fedayeen raids of early April were not directly countered at the time. Early in the period under review, however, the two Egyptian officers alleged to be directly implicated were killed by parcel bombs, one delivered in Gaza on the 12th of July and one delivered in Amman on the 14th of July. The Israelis were presumably responsible. There has subsequently been a recrudescence of Egyptian activity on a small scale in the Negev which has almost invariably, and usually within twenty-four hours of the original incident, drawn a small-scale reprisal. This also is a new departure and in certain circumstances a dangerous one. There has been little real tension on this border in the past two months, however, owing to the withdrawal of Egyptian forces to the Canal Zone.

7. The same swiftness of reprisal has been evident on the Jordan frontier, but in this case the tension has been much greater and less attributable to the border situation. Fundamentally this tension has stemmed from Jordanian fears of Israeli invasion and Israeli fears that a power vacuum has developed in Jordan which might result in its falling under either Iraqi or Egyptian control. The latter possibility is so fraught with danger for Israel owing to her long and exposed border with Jordan that Israel might well intervene in Jordan if it arose. The chances of Israeli intervention if Iraqi forces moved into Jordan are less, but by no means negligible since considerable apprehension is caused in Israel, no doubt falsely, by the absence of an armistice agreement with Iraq. This tension developed in January during the riots which followed the visit of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to Amman and has been very noticeable since the dismissal of General Glubb on the 2nd of March. It temporarily came to a head with the announcement on the 26th of June of the dissolution of the Jordanian Parliament. This announcement was followed almost immediately by an interview between Mr. Ben-Gurion and the Chief of Staff of the U.N.T.S.O. in which Mr. Ben-Gurion, apart from threatening reprisals for border incidents, said that Jordan's failure to implement Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement regarding, *inter alia*, access to Mount Scopus meant in effect that no demarcation line existed between Jordan and Israel. (Jerusalem telegram No. 206 to you.)

8. Taken in conjunction with unfounded Arab intelligence reports of Israeli concentrations of troops in the Jerusalem area, these threats by Mr. Ben-Gurion led to an assumption in Jordan that a major Israeli attack against Jerusalem was imminent. When this proved false tension was much relieved and it may have been assumed that the threats had been nothing more than an extravagant statement in an interview in which Mr. Ben-Gurion had become very heated. I firmly believe, however, that the possibility of operations to occupy the west bank of the Jordan river or, as a first step, to occupy Mount Scopus in force has in fact been seriously envisaged by the Israel Government to meet the contingency of a marked deterioration in the internal situation in Jordan. In this respect the dissolution of the Jordanian Parliament was not enough to entrain such heavy consequences, although it may have been something of a borderline case. In the event, the Israelis took no action, and in reaching this decision they were almost certainly helped by a stiff warning to the Israel Ambassador in London that aggression on the part of Israel would bring into play the Anglo-Jordanian treaty. This warning was renewed at the end of the period when two sharp Israeli reprisals against Jordanian police posts revived Jordanian fears of imminent invasion.

9. The general picture thus presented by the Israel Government's foreign policy in the past three months has been one of caution over the Suez Canal issue, intransigence over border incidents, and deep anxiety over the situation in Jordan. None of this can be said to represent a change in the orientation of Israel's policy. Indeed, little change was to be expected from the change of Foreign Minister except the hardening of Israel's attitude in minor matters forecast by Her Majesty's Ambassador in his despatch No. 84 of the 20th of June. This forecast has been amply borne out by the Israel Government's obstructiveness over our requests for the release of blocked British private and commercial balances which I am reporting separately and by their insistence on sending an Israeli delegate to the meeting in Tehran of Sub-Committee "A" of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee of the World Health Organisation against our advice.

10. It is clear, however, that the combination of Mr. Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence with

Mrs. Meir as Minister for Foreign Affairs is working harmoniously and is a powerful one commanding considerable popular support. We may deplore its attitude to reprisals. Reprisals apart, however, it is unlikely to engage in irresponsible adventures and it has shown much patience during a critical period. Nevertheless, on looking into the future, one must expect that under this leadership the Israel Government will pursue Israel's fundamental strategic interests with great vigour. It might therefore be useful to outline briefly what these interests appear to be.

11. As I see it, Israel's main strategic interest at present is to keep Jordan out of the Egyptian sphere of control at all costs. This is a question of national survival, and if the likelihood appeared imminent of Jordan falling under Egyptian control I have little doubt that Israel would seek some pretext to invade Jordan and at the same time devise some stratagem to further embroil the United Kingdom with Egypt to prevent either country from interfering.

This primary interest is closely connected with the Suez issue in that the Egyptian threat to Jordan would become much greater if Nasser's prestige continues to grow. The Israelis are therefore likely to do their best to sabotage any compromise solution of the Suez issue which might leave Nasser's prestige unimpaired. They would also, of course, oppose a compromise issue which continued to bar the Canal to Israeli shipping but this issue is far less vital to Israel than the question of who controls Jordan. As their secondary strategic interest I would therefore place opposition to Iraqi control in Jordan (unless they could extract for this a satisfactory price). Third, and of approximately equal importance, I suggest, are the questions of freedom of navigation through Suez and through the Gulf of Aqaba. And fourth and last, the still unresolved question of the use of Jordan waters.

I have, &c.

P. A. G. WESTLAKE.



VR 1423/1

No. 18

# CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ON SEPTEMBER 28, 1956

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Pierson Dixon (New York)*

(No. 320. Confidential)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office,  
October 4, 1956.*

When the Israeli Ambassador called on me on the 28th of September he asked for Her Majesty's Government's support for Israel's participation in the forthcoming meeting in the Security Council to discuss the Suez Canal. He said that Israel felt that she had every right to appear as she had a vital interest in the matter.

2. I reminded the Ambassador that the question of Israeli participation had been left over to the next meeting. The difficulty was that if Israel were permitted to attend the debate every other Arab State would wish to attend also and the meeting would become excessively long and tedious.

3. Mr. Elath said he understood this, but he wished to point out that Israel was alone whereas there were many Arab States. All the Arabs would say the same, so that it was only necessary for one of them to be heard. But if Israel were not present her view would be unheard. If she were admitted, Israel would not try to bring in other aspects of the Arab-Israel problem. She would confine herself to Egyptian violation of the 1888 Convention and the Security Council Resolution of 1951. He asserted that Israel was the only State with any *locus standi* in the matter before the Security Council, and she was the only country to have suffered from Egyptian interference with free transit through the Canal, which she had now done for some eight years. He pleaded that Israel should not be victimised because Her Majesty's Government did not want the representatives of other Arab States to be admitted to the meeting.

4. I told the Ambassador that the present complaint before the Security Council was the action of Egypt in removing part of the complex international system that had been set up for the Canal. The subject was not the same as the more specific one of the denial of transit to Israeli shipping, although the two were of course connected. The French and ourselves would speak for all the injured parties on the subject before the Council, and the Israeli Government need have no fear on that score.

5. Mr. Elath said that in that case Israel must reconsider her attitude and might have to make a direct approach to the Security Council. I said that it had already occurred to me that one way out would be for Israel to table a third item for discussion. But I pointed out that the Arabs might thereby be encouraged to bring in the events of the last few days on the Israel-Jordan border. This might be embarrassing for the Israeli Government. I assured him again that Israel's interest would not be forgotten in discussion of the Anglo-French item.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Tel Aviv, Washington, Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Bonn, Rome, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Tehran, Addis Ababa, Tokyo, Ankara, Lisbon, Cairo and Moscow, and to the United Kingdom High Commissioners at Canberra, Karachi and Wellington.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.



VR 1423/2

No. 19

# CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ON SEPTEMBER 28, 1956

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Westlake (Tel Aviv)*

(No. 159. Confidential)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office,  
October 4, 1956.*

The Israeli Ambassador called on me on September 28 at his request. He wished to ask for Her Majesty's Government's support for Israel's adherence to the Suez Canal Users' Association (S.C.U.A.). He said that this would be in Israel's best interest. She was at present the only country whose shipping was denied free passage of the Canal. To obtain this would greatly improve her economic position as much of her trade was with countries east of Suez. For example, she shipped fertilisers to India and imported food from India and other eastern countries in return. Most important of all, however, was oil. Israel had already consumed over 1 million tons this year. Most of this had had to come from Venezuela. Israel would prefer to obtain it from sources nearer at hand, especially from Iran. It was not of course necessary that the first ship through the Canal, when the present crisis was resolved, should be an Israeli one, or one bound for Israel. But Israel wished to ensure that a settlement of the present dispute would open the Canal to her shipping.

2. I told the Ambassador that it might be a little time before we were ready seriously to discuss membership of the proposed Association. When we came to this point there might be other runners in the field in addition to Israel. Some of Colonel Nasser's friends might wish to join. There were Soviet Russia, Saudi Arabia and mention had even been made of Albania. Their adherence might prove embarrassing. Our intention was to proceed by stages. The first was to set up an Executive Council. This would settle the criteria for membership of the Association. Our first idea had been to make one qualification the passage of 1 million tons of shipping through the Canal during the past year. This, however, had now been dropped. We had always envisaged the possibility of Israel wishing to join, but, as I had said, we had not yet reached the stage of considering membership.

3. Mr. Elath then renewed his plea for support, basing himself on our declaration that the Association would be open to all those who wished to join it. It was not Israel's fault that she had not been able to send 1 million tons of shipping through the Canal. Nor could Israel really be equated to a country like Albania. He said again that Israel considered it of vital interest to join and asked if I could sum up Her Majesty's Government's attitude in one sentence. Could I say that Her Majesty's Government would favourably consider Israel's request?

4. I said that frankly I could not go so far as to say that, because I could not be thought to be committing the Association at the present stage. Initially we might prefer to limit the Association to the 18 countries represented at the Second London Conference, or as many of them as wished to join. We had not yet conceded the principle that more members would be admitted, and criteria for membership had not been yet considered. What we wanted to do was to secure free transit through the Canal for all shipping. It had been whispered that we were prepared to make a bargain with Egypt whereby the situation would be left as it was before Colonel Nasser seized the Canal. There was no truth in this. I would of course bear the Ambassador's representations in mind.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Washington, Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Bonn, Rome, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Tehran, Addis Ababa, Tokyo, Ankara, Lisbon, Cairo, Moscow, the Head of the United Kingdom Delegation, New York, and the United Kingdom High Commissioners at Canberra, Karachi and Wellington.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.







thought that he had agreed. He complained of our attitude, but we seemed to get little thanks for what we did. Israel was a difficult country to help. Her Majesty's Government could, for example, have stopped the supply of Mystère aircraft from France and F.86 aircraft from Canada, but they had done nothing of the sort.

9. The Ambassador hastily said that he was grateful for this, genuinely so. But the United Kingdom had not supplied any Centurion tanks. Although the position was now better in the air Israel was still weak on land, whereas Egypt was strong. He repeated that the most convincing proof of Her Majesty's Government's regard for Israel's interest would be the release of these tanks. I said that I did not exclude this in principle but Israel's behaviour made the supply of arms more difficult.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Ankara, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Paris and Washington, the Head of the United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations, New York, the Head of the Political Office with Middle East Forces and to Her Majesty's Consul-General in Jerusalem.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

SECRET

VR 1091/368

No. 21

# ISRAEL MOBILISATION

(1)

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 26)

(No. 552. Secret)

Tel Aviv,

(Telegraphic)

October 26, 1956.

There were indications last night of a substantial call-up accompanied by considerable military activity in the Beersheba district.

2. Despite recent incidents on the Egyptian border, I do not think that these moves are connected with preparations to launch a reprisal, at least of the conventional sort, for which no mobilisation is required.

3. The most likely explanation is, I think, a build-up in the south, perhaps at Eilat, to counter the risk of an Egyptian incursion into Jordan. The immediate cause is probably the announcement of the establishment of the Jordan-Egyptian Joint Staff Organisation.

4. There is no (repeat no) evidence that these moves are directed against Jordan and on political grounds I think this unlikely at the moment.

VR 1091/368

(2)

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir John Nicholls (Tel Aviv)

(No. 1025. Secret)

Foreign Office,

(Telegraphic)

October 27, 1956.

Your telegram No. 552 and subsequent reports by Military Attaché: Israel mobilisation.

I should like you to make enquiries with the Foreign Minister as to purport of these moves. You may justify our interest by referring to recent troubles with Jordan and say that you hope no further action is contemplated against Jordan. The Israelis must realise our commitment to Jordan under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty.

VR 1076/122

(3)

Mr. Coulson to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)

(No. 2190. Secret)

Washington,

(Telegraphic)

October 28, 1956.

Israel.

In the absence of Mr. Dulles from Washington, Mr. Murphy summoned the French Ambassador and myself this afternoon. He said the United States Government were seriously concerned at reports of Israel mobilisation which had now reached 80 per cent. President had just issued statement (text of my immediately following telegram) and State Department were now carrying out consultation with us mentioned in the statement. They very much hoped that the United Kingdom and French Governments would also take such action as they could to restrain the Israel Government.

2. I informed Mr. Murphy of instructions in your telegram No. 1025 to Tel Aviv and asked whether the United States Government intended to make any new naval dispositions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Mr. Murphy said "No"; they hoped their warning would have the desired effect.

SECRET



3. Mr. Dulles subsequently arrived, and was informed of the position. He said that in his opinion the Israelis had certainly chosen their moment in the light of our difficulties with Egypt, the disorganisation in Jordan and the belief that, with the imminence of the United States elections the United States Government would hesitate to take any anti-Israel action. If so, they had made a serious miscalculation. He asked whether we would carry out our undertakings under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty. I said I thought we certainly would. He commented that it might be more difficult for us if the aggression was against Egypt.

VR 1076/123

(4)

*Mr. Coulson to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 28)*

(No. 2191. Unclassified)  
(Telegraphic)

*Washington,  
October 28, 1956.*

Following is text of statement issued by the White House this afternoon.

During the last several days I have received disturbing reports from the Middle East. These included information that Israel was making a heavy mobilisation of its armed forces. These reports became so well authenticated that yesterday morning, after a meeting with the Secretary of State, I sent a personal message to the Prime Minister of Israel expressing my grave concern and renewing a previous plea that no forcible initiative be taken which would endanger the peace.

I have just received additional reports which indicate that Israel mobilisation has continued and has become almost complete with consequent stoppage of many civil activities. The gravity of the situation is such that I am dispatching a further urgent message to Prime Minister Ben Gurion.

I have given instructions that these developments be discussed with the United Kingdom and France which joined with the United States in the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950, with respect to the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. While we have not heard of such large-scale mobilisation in countries neighbouring Israel which would warrant such Israel mobilisation, I have also directed that my concern over the present situation be communicated to other Middle Eastern States. Urgently requesting that they refrain from any action which could lead to hostilities.

The Security Council of the United Nations now has before it various aspects of the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. I earnestly hope that none of the nations involved will take any action that will hinder the Council in its efforts to achieve a peaceful solution.

VR 1091/373

(5)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)*

(No. 570. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)

*Tel Aviv,  
October 29, 1956.*

My telegram No. 552.

Further reconnaissances by my staff yesterday showed negligible military activity anywhere north of Tel Aviv. The Israel Air Force has also been thinned out in the north and concentrated in the south.

2. The general trend of movement is into the Negev, south of Beersheba, but reconnaissance south of Beersheba is being prevented by the police. Very little activity has been seen between Beersheba and the Jordan border or on the coast at the north end of the Gaza Strip.

SECRET

VR 1091/377

(6)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)*

(No. 575. Confidential)  
(Telegraphic)

*Tel Aviv,  
October 29, 1956.*

My telegram No. 566.

I saw the Foreign Minister this morning and spoke in accordance with instructions contained in your telegram No. 1025. Having reminded her of our obligations under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty, I said I should be glad if she could give me an assurance that no hostile move against Jordan was contemplated.

2. Mrs. Meir said, without appreciable hesitation, "I think I can give you that assurance."

3. I said that though I could readily understand some precautionary calling up of reservists, I and my foreign colleagues were at a loss to explain the scale of the present mobilisation. It would cause economic dislocation such as Israel could ill afford and seemed much more far reaching than purely precautionary measures would justify. Mrs. Meir contested this on the standard lines, viz., small number of troops normally [? group omitted] arms, risk of war on several fronts and dangers of Middle Eastern situation in general. Israel was not seeking military adventures, but must be prepared.

VR 1076/122

(7)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Coulson. (Washington)*

(No. 4987. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)

*Foreign Office,  
October 29, 1956.*

Your telegram No. 2190: Israel.

Please tell Mr. Dulles and the French Ambassador that I welcome this tripartite consultation. I suggest that you should have another early meeting, if possible to-day, to review the situation once more.

2. You should take advantage of this meeting to probe the American position. You could say that as I see it the Tripartite Declaration is unlikely to be applicable for purely practical reasons. As I understand it, the French Government would not feel able in present circumstances to go to war with Israel on account of an Israel attack on Jordan. I imagine that the United States Government is in a similar position. Consequently if Israel were to attack Jordan the burden of conducting military operations against Israel would rest solely on Her Majesty's Government in view of the provisions of the Anglo-Jordan Treaty.

3. Nasser has declared that the Tripartite Declaration confers no rights and imposes no obligations on its authors and his Press has stated that Egypt would not allow Western troops to come to Egypt's aid. Quite apart from the fact that public opinion here would not accept military action against Israel in defence of Egypt, it would seem that Egypt herself has made the Tripartite Declaration inoperative.

4. According to our information the facts that the Egyptian army has been fully mobilised for some time, that Nasser has publicly stated that it is his policy to liquidate Israel, and the new joint command arrangements seem to explain the Israel decision to mobilise.

SECRET



VR 1091/399

(8)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Johnson. (Amman)*(No. 2195. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)*Foreign Office,  
October 29, 1956.*

You should inform Jordanian Government at once that with reference to reports of Israeli mobilisation Her Majesty's Government are once again asking the Israeli Government for an assurance that there will be no attack on Jordan.

VR 1091/399

(9)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir John Nicholls. (Received October 29)*(No. 1034. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)*Foreign Office,  
October 29, 1956.*

My telegram No. 2195 to Amman.

Please inform Israel Government urgently of this communication to Jordan Government. You should at the same time request assurances that there will be no attack on Jordan.

Please reply Emergency.

VR 1091/382

(10)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)*(No. 579. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)*Tel Aviv,  
October 29, 1956.*

My telegram No. 570.

Chief of Staff of United Nations Truce Supervisory Organisation, General Burns, told me this afternoon that in his opinion reports of "almost complete mobilisation" were much exaggerated and that so far as he could judge it could not amount to more than about 50 per cent. and probably represented not more than call-up of one reserve division.

2. Our own view is that mobilisation may be more than 50 per cent. but that our information is insufficient to justify stating a figure.

3. My Military Attaché estimates that a force of about two divisions is now concentrated in the Negev. Southward movement from a staging area south-east of Tel Aviv still continued to-day however but on a diminished scale.

VR 1091/378

No. 22

**ISRAEL'S ATTACK ON EGYPTIAN TERRITORY**

(1)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)*(No. 580. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)*Tel Aviv,  
October 29, 1956.*

My Service Attachés with their French colleagues were called to the Ministry of Defence this evening at 19.15 hours and told that Israel forces entered Egyptian territory to-day.

2. An unspecified force of paratroopers had been dropped about 20 miles east of the town of Suez, and a light division had crossed the frontier on a broad front between El Auja and Eilath. It was hoped that they would link up with the paratroopers to-night.

3. The object was to reach the Canal and only to fight if resistance was encountered.

4. In reply to questions, the informant said that there had been no air fighting and no loss of Israel aircraft. There had been no action against Egyptian airfields.

5. The Attachés were asked to inform no one except their respective Ambassadors, but were told that an announcement in vague terms would be made at 21.30 hours local time to-night.

(2)

*Mr. Coulson to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 29)*(No. 2197. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)*Washington,  
October 29, 1956.*

Your telegram No. 4987: Israel.

At my request Mr. Dulles arranged a further meeting this evening, at which French Minister (in Ambassador's absence) was also present. I said that you welcomed these consultations and that you would be particularly anxious to know his thinking in the light of the Israeli invasion of Egypt which had been reported since your telegram was despatched.

2. Mr. Dulles replied that he had been considering an immediate approach to the United Nations to-night, with perhaps a request for discussion in the Security Council to-morrow. As parties to the Tripartite Declaration we should act quickly if we were to have any effect on the Israelis and Arabs. The State Department had had on the stocks for some time a draft resolution, which he handed to me and to my French colleague (text in my immediately following telegram).

3. I said that, for the reasons given in your telegram under reference, your view was that the Tripartite Declaration was unlikely to be applicable in the event of an Israeli attack on Egypt. Mr. Dulles agreed and said that, so far as military action was concerned, the United States Government could not act without Congressional approval, but there was still the possibility of economic and financial sanctions. The French Minister said he thought the position of his Government would be the same as yours.

4. In a brief discussion of the draft resolution, Mr. Dulles pointed out that this was at present no more than a working document and had not been seen by the President. In elucidation of paragraph 4, he said that this would involve the suspension of American aid to Israel. This would be no bad thing as countering the widely held belief that no anti-Israel action would be taken during the election period. The Administration did not, of course, like it, but they were quite prepared to act.

5. I said that I had not had time to receive any indication of your views about Security Council action. In view, however, of our probable inability to take military action under the Tripartite Declaration, I thought it likely that you would favour this procedure. As, however, the hour was already late in London, I hoped he would agree that the Security Council should not be approached until to-morrow



morning; my French colleague supported me in this for the same reasons. Mr. Dulles agreed, but asked whether we would object if he told the Press that this possibility had been considered during our present consultations. I said I could not, of course, commit you in any way, but I did not see any objection as this was such an obvious possibility.

6. I should be grateful for your urgent instructions on whether you agree to approach the Security Council. Once this decision is taken, discussion on wording of item and text of resolution can no doubt best be discussed between delegations in New York.

(3)

*Mr. Coulson to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 30)*

(No. 2201. Unclassified)  
(Telegraphic)  
Israel.

Washington,  
October 29, 1956.

The following statement was issued at about 9 p.m. this evening following a meeting of Mr. Dulles and other senior members of the Administration with the President:—

At the meeting the President recalled that the United States under this and prior Administrations has pledged itself to assist the victim of any aggression in the Middle East. We shall honour our pledge. The United States is in consultation with the British and French Governments parties with us to the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 and the United States plans, as contemplated by that declaration that the situation shall be taken to the United Nations Security Council tomorrow morning.

2. The question of whether and when the President will call a special session of the Congress will be decided in the light of the unfolding situation.

(4)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Johnstone (Amman)*

(No. 2206. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)

Foreign Office,  
October 30, 1956.

Tel Aviv telegram No. 575.

Please speak at once to the Jordan Government as follows:—

All the available evidence goes to show that the Israeli action is directed solely against Egypt. Her Majesty's Government have obtained assurances from the Israel Government that they will not attack Jordan. This is a major achievement. You should also point out that if the Jordan Government attack Israel they will have no right to our support in the event of an Israeli counter-attack.

2. The move of R.A.F. to Mafrq should now be carried out as rapidly as possible. Minister of Defence concurs.

3. You should inform the Jordan Government at once, giving the reason contained in last sentence of my telegram No. 2175.

(5)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Coulson (Washington)*

(No. 5012. Confidential)  
(Telegraphic)

Foreign Office,  
October 30, 1956.

Your telegram No. 2197: Israel.

The United States Ambassador called at 9.30 this morning at my request. I said I wished to make four points.

(i) Our information from Washington suggested that the United States Government intended to introduce a resolution into the Security Council

immediately condemning Israel for aggression. In our view the issue was not nearly so clear cut as this. Indeed it seemed to us that the Israelis had a reasonable case for saying that they were acting in self-defence. Egypt was maintaining a blockade of Israel, both through the Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba. Moreover, Nasser had made it clear that the destruction of Israel was next on his list of priorities.

(ii) Her Majesty's Ambassador in Tel Aviv had been instructed last night to warn the Israelis that if Jordan were attacked we should take action under the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty. The Israelis had given us an assurance that they would not attack Jordan.

(iii) We were concerned for the security of the Canal and for the maintenance of free transit through it. We had £75 million worth of shipping in or near the Canal. Israeli forces were reported to be only 18 miles from Suez and from a military point of view it seemed inevitable that they would try to seize the crossings over the Canal to prevent a counter-attack by Egyptian armoured forces.

(iv) French Ministers were coming to London this morning for consultations. In answer to a suggestion by Mr. Aldrich, I said that I would certainly try to see him after our discussions with the French.

2. Mr. Aldrich said that his information from Washington confirmed that the United States Government's intention was to introduce a resolution in the Security Council condemning Israel for aggression. A message he had received from Mr. Dulles made it quite clear that, in spite of any sympathy which the United States Government might be expected to feel for Israel, they would not be deterred from doing what they thought right. Mr. Aldrich said that there was deep suspicion in Washington that the French had some prior arrangement with the Israelis. If the United States and United Kingdom took opposite positions in the Security Council, this would give the impression that the Israeli action had been contrived with the United Kingdom and France as a move to get rid of Nasser. The effect on public opinion in the United States would be very serious indeed. Mr. Aldrich admitted that there might be some substance in an Israeli claim that they were acting in self-defence, but he did not feel that their case was a strong one and in his view it would be difficult to deny that the Tripartite Declaration imposed an obligation to define the aggressor and then to intervene, possibly by some form of police action.

3. In conclusion, Mr. Aldrich said that he was less interested in the past than in the future. It seemed to him that the essential thing was for the United States and the United Kingdom to act together in whatever steps now had to be taken.

(6)

*Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir John Nicholls (Tel Aviv)*

(No. 1055. Unclassified)  
(Telegraphic)

Foreign Office,  
October 30, 1956.

Following is text of communication handed to the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires by Sir I. Kirkpatrick and M. Pineau at 4.15 p.m. G.M.T. to-day, October 30.

The Governments of the United Kingdom and France have taken note of the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Egypt. This event threatens to disrupt the freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal on which the economic life of many nations depends.

The Governments of the United Kingdom and France are resolved to do all in their power to bring about the early cessation of hostilities and to safeguard the free passage of the Canal.

They accordingly request the Government of Israel:—

- (a) to stop all warlike action on land, sea and air forthwith;
- (b) to withdraw all Israeli military forces to a distance of 10 miles east of the Canal.

A communication has been addressed to the Government of Egypt, requesting them to cease hostilities and to withdraw their forces from the neighbourhood of the



Canal, and to accept the temporary occupation by Anglo-French forces of key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez.

The United Kingdom and French Governments request an answer to this communication within 12 hours. If at the expiration of that time one or both Governments have not undertaken to comply with the above requirements, United Kingdom and French forces will intervene in whatever strength may be necessary to secure compliance.

(7)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 30)*

(No. 597. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)

Tel Aviv,  
October 30, 1956.

My Military Attaché was officially informed at about 19.00 hours local time to-night of the following:—

Israel drive west now on two axes.

2. South on axis Kuntilla-Nahel-Suez. Paratroop battalion now firm on high ground in area road junction 30 km. east of Suez. Have been reached by armoured cars of supporting brigade which is now in area Gobla, 35 km. east of paratroop battalion. A second brigade is now at Nahel having overcome all opposition there.

3. North on axis Qasseima-Ismailia. Egyptian position at Qasseima overrun by Israeli armoured brigade at 10.00 hours, October 30, effecting clean break-through. Planned operations to-night involve holding attack northward towards Abu Ageila while motorised infantry and light armour by-passes to south on to main axis to Ismailia.

4. Major movement and operation not expected to-night or to-morrow. Main action likely to be limited to air attack if necessary.

5. No significant reaction so far from Egyptian force in Gaza strip and Rafah-El Arish area. Israelis have in Gaza strip [? group omitted] Beersheba area adequate reserves to deal with any possible action here. Israeli appreciation is that Egyptian forces are demoralised.

(8)

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 31)*

(No. 598. Secret)  
(Telegraphic)

Tel Aviv,  
October 31, 1956.

Your telegram No. 1055.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs tells me that following is text of their reply:—

"The Government of Israel has received communication addressed jointly by the Governments of France and the United Kingdom to the Governments of Israel and Egypt for cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of their forces to a distance of 10 miles from the Suez Canal.

2. The response to this communication the Government of Israel have the honour to state that it accepts the conditions both as to time and area and declares its willingness to take the necessary practical steps to this end. In giving this undertaking it is assumed by the Government of Israel that positive response will also have been forthcoming from the Egyptian side."

2. Please see my immediately following telegram.

VR 1071/133

No. 23

**RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND MRS. MEIR, THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER, AND  
MR. EBAN, THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED  
NATIONS, AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA ON NOVEMBER 16, 1956**

Mrs. Meir said that she thought recent events had proved two points. First, that Nasser was not the effective leader of the Arab world, since the other Arab countries had failed to give him any real help. Even the Resolution passed in Beirut seemed to be no more than a gesture of solidarity. The second point was that, even with their Soviet arms, Egyptian forces had been shown to be totally ineffective. If it had not been for the United Nations, Nasser might now be down and out. Even so, the other Arab countries would be quite shrewd enough to see and realise the significance of these two points. Mrs. Meir said that she would like to discuss the action to be taken in regard to press and public opinion and the action in regard to the United States Administration. She was also concerned at the suggestions appearing in the press that the United Kingdom was now cold if not hostile to Israel. This had a very bad effect in Israel itself and, by affecting public opinion elsewhere, tended to isolate Israel again.

2. The Secretary of State said that our position had always been that the Israeli forces should withdraw, but we had stated this in general terms and had also qualified it in the sense that Israel must have assurances that the *status quo* and the Egyptian threat would not be re-created. We were, however, under heavy pressure from the Arabs and it must, for instance, be in our common interest to preserve Nuri's position and avoid the possibility of oil sanctions being taken against us. As he had explained both to Mr. Eban and to the Israeli Ambassador in London, we should like to handle these matters together. We would not always agree but we should tell each other what we thought, and try so to arrange our actions that the least harm was done to either of us.

3. Mrs. Meir said that Israel was also under heavy pressure. The United Nations had called for withdrawal and Israel had accepted this, but the United Nations Resolution did not say that Egypt should reoccupy Sinai, the Gaza Strip and the Gulf

of Aqaba. It would be intolerable if the only result would be to establish the position which existed before October 29. The Secretary of State said that in his conversation with the Secretary-General the latter had shown a realistic attitude, but he might now weaken in the face of pressure for the United Nations Force not to go into the Canal Zone. For administrative reasons it might well be that the force could not in fact establish itself anywhere else, but the Secretary-General evidently thought it would be difficult to establish the position that the force should remain in the area of the Canal until the Canal itself had been cleared, and its future régime established. A demand that the Anglo-French forces should be withdrawn from Port Said and that Israeli forces should withdraw from Sinai before any of these matters had been settled could create difficulties for both of us, since it would leave the future completely in the air. The Secretary of State said that he thought the position as regards the United States press had improved, but he was still very unhappy about the attitude of the United States Administration, which seemed still to be completely unrealistic. Mr. Lodge's reaction to the Soviet threat to send in volunteers had only been that the Anglo-French forces should get out more quickly. The Secretary of State had been trying to make the point that our possession of Port Said and the Israeli hold on Sinai were the only bargaining counters which we, the Secretary-General or the United Nations possessed. He had tried to put this across in all his talks and would do the same during his forthcoming visit to Washington. He thought, however, that next week would be difficult since the Assembly would no doubt take up the Secretary-General's report on his visit to Egypt and the United States resolutions on Palestine and the Suez Canal.

4. Mr. Eban said that he did not think there would be a majority for the United States Resolution on Palestine unless it were considerably amended to meet the Arabs. The Secretary of State put forward the argument in paragraph 3 of Foreign Office



telegram No. 1857 about the 1947 Resolution, but this was hotly contested by Mrs. Meir and Mr. Eban, who maintained that the 1947 Resolution was not the legal basis for Israel's existence since it had never been accepted and was in present circumstances completely unrealistic. Israel could certainly not accept it since it would deprive her of 45 per cent. of her territory and she doubted whether the Arab States would really be prepared to negotiate on this basis. In their view the pressing problems which the United Nations should tackle were the future position of Sinai, the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba. Mr. Pearson had talked of the possible demilitarisation of Sinai and this seemed a sensible approach. But a Resolution which simply established another Committee implied no more than a return to the *status quo* and would be completely ineffective. Mrs. Meir said that she thought there were signs of a more realistic attitude, both in the United States press and in some part of the Administration as well as in some of the Delegations at the United Nations. It still remained, however, to convince the United States Government that they should work, not necessarily for an Israeli solution, but for one which would be in the interest of Europe as a whole.

5. The Secretary of State said that our position would obviously be much stronger if it were not for our dependence on Middle East oil. There was a real danger that the Arab countries might impose a boycott, and we could not in present circumstances expect financial assistance from the United States to replace Middle East supplies. Mrs. Meir suggested the possibility of a pipeline across the Negev, but the Secretary of State doubted, in face of an Arab boycott, if even

Iran would allow her oil to go through such a pipeline.

6. The Secretary of State said that we had it in mind to make token withdrawals of our forces from Port Said as they were replaced by United Nations forces. This might well hold the position for a time against pressure for complete withdrawal. He wondered whether Israel could do something similar in the nature of token withdrawals. Mrs. Meir did not take up this point, but said that, if the Secretary-General came back from Cairo with an unsatisfactory Egyptian response, she thought that we and the French should take a firm line. The Secretary of State explained the positions which we could theoretically adopt on the lines of (a) and (b) in telegram No. 1253 to the Foreign Office. The difficulty, as he saw it, was that, although the Secretary-General was privately very much of our mind, he would probably not feel able to insist on satisfactory conditions with the Egyptians. Even if he did, the latter would probably refuse and we should be unlikely to get the support of the Assembly against the Egyptian position. Mrs. Meir said that we could not leave it to Nasser to say when the United Nations Force had completed its functions. She also thought it would be dangerous to leave this vital question entirely to the judgment of the Secretary-General.

7. It was agreed that the most important task was to induce the United States Government to decide whose side they were on and to persuade them of the futility of re-establishing an Egyptian and Soviet base on the Canal and in Sinai.

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VR 1015/30

No. 24

# ACCOUNT OF THE HERUT PARTY'S FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD IN TEL AVIV FROM OCTOBER 1-5, 1956

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 19)

(No. 148. Confidential)  
Sir,

Tel Aviv,  
November 14, 1956.

I have the honour to report that the 4th Annual Conference of the extreme Right-wing Herut Party, led by Mr. Menahem Beigin, M.K., a former commander of the terrorist organisation Irgun Zvai Leumi, was held in Tel Aviv's largest theatre, the Habima, from the 1st to the 5th of October; it was attended by 407 delegates and over 1,000 guests.

2. To a remarkable degree the conference followed the pattern of the previous one, held in April 1954, which was reported in my predecessor's despatch No. 82 of the 4th of May of that year. The one important difference was that while the 3rd Conference was largely ignored by the Press, the 4th received a great deal of attention, albeit almost universally antagonistic. No doubt the main reason for this was that although the ordinary Press and public do not regard Herut as presenting any sort of immediate threat to Ben-Gurion's fundamentally moderate régime, they have kept a more vigilant eye on its activities since it virtually doubled its support at the General Election last year, when it gained about 15 per cent. of the national vote and 13 per cent. of the seats in the Knesset.

3. Mr. Beigin's opening speech was undoubtedly the main feature of the whole conference. As at the 3rd Conference, this young (he is only 43), brilliant and, to many, romantic ex-terrorist-turned-demagogue quickly roused the enthusiasm of his crowded audience (among which was a small number of unimportant diplomats) with a fierce attack on Mr. Ben-Gurion's coalition Government. He started by proclaiming that there were clear signs that the Herut movement was nearing power. He exploited to the full the superficially significant fact that since the General Election of July last year Herut has been the second largest single party in the country. He claimed in particular that at that election they had gained over 20,000 votes from Mapai. If the movement attained power, he said, it would call upon the whole Jewish nation to come to Israel and would declare that foreign (e.g., Arab) conquest could not place in doubt their right to the land of Israel in its historic (but undefined) completeness. He quoted the Bible to give historical and divine sanction to his views.

4. Mr. Beigin went on to say that a Herut Government would cast about for allies, but not sponsors. The American Government would never sign an alliance with Israel for they had no mutual interests. But Israel did have mutual interests with France and therefore it was with her that Israel should establish her first *entente*. Interestingly enough, Mr. Beigin's remarks about Britain in this context were not nearly as hostile as might have been expected. He did say that Britain had paid a high price for her "treachery" but he declared that if she reformed, Israel would be willing to go side by side with her against their common enemy, the Arabs.

5. Herut's views on economic policy were expounded by Mr. Bader, M.K., on the second day, when he charged the Government with squandering public funds, with tolerating monopolies, with discrimination against the private *entrepreneur* and with placing too much emphasis on agricultural expansion at the expense of industry. However, his remarks on inflation, one of Israel's major problems, were quite barren. The conference's concluding resolutions on economic matters—and indeed those on political and security matters, too—were too empty to be worth reporting. They were far inferior to those produced by the 3rd Conference, some of which had been markedly intelligent.

6. There are those among Herut's ranks who are not content that power should be wrested from the ruling coalition by parliamentary means. They advocate, though inevitably in vague terms, the conquest of power by force. Mr. Meridor, M.K., is the main representative of this faction. He wishes to transform what is in effect, despite its thunder, no more than an extremist political

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party into a militant liberation movement. In his speech to the conference, Mr. Meridor advocated the expansion of the party's "operational bodies" and offered to strengthen Herut's torch-carrying youth movement. However, this is a minority faction. If it did nothing else, this conference did establish that the bulk of Herut still rests its hope of success on democratic means. In this it follows Mr. Beigin who, in his closing speech to the Congress, went out of his way to convince the country of his political propriety. In an almost poetic portrayal of the public rejoicing to which Herut's accession to power would give rise, he promised that this would only take place by the free will of the people. There would be no bloodshed, rebellion or disturbances. He contradicted those conference speakers who said that Herut's first enemy was Mapai. Herut had no internal enemy; a Jew was a Jew. The first enemy was President Nasser.

7. At the time of the previous Convention in 1954 there were grounds for thinking that Herut might merit the title of a "party in decline." Unfortunately, Herut has not in fact declined; indeed, it has greatly increased its strength in these last two years. Nevertheless, it is an isolated party to which all other Israeli parties except the General Zionists are implacably hostile. And even the General Zionists, with whom Herut has been conducting long negotiations for a merger, seem to have finally decided that Herut's price, that the General Zionists should accept a policy of "liberating" Palestine's "historical" territories, is too high. For the time being, therefore, Herut is isolated in the Knesset and cannot compete against Mapai or hold serious pretension to being the nucleus of an alternative coalition. Indeed, Mr. Ben-Gurion's sudden and brilliant invasion of Sinai and the Gaza Strip, a little more than three weeks after the conference ended, has completely stolen Herut's thunder for the moment, and it is significant that Mr. Ben-Gurion's subsequent decision to withdraw from Sinai under pressure has not been seriously opposed by Herut. The party will undoubtedly recover from this low ebb but in such disturbed times it is impossible to predict its future.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.

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VR 1091/964

No. 25

# CHINESE REACTIONS TO MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

Mr. O'Neill to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 20)

(No. 300. Confidential)

Peking,

Sir,

November 9, 1956.

In my despatch No. 264 of the 26th of September I sent you an account of the statements and Press comment which appeared in China on the subject of the Suez Canal question from the beginning of August until the last week in September. I have the honour in this despatch to send a further report on Chinese reactions to the situation in the Middle East with particular reference to the Israeli attack on Egypt on the 29th of October and the subsequent intervention by the British and French Governments.

2. From the end of September until the last days of October the Chinese Press continued to give great prominence to the Suez Canal question by publishing reports and comment hostile to the United States, Britain and France and favourable to Egypt, but there was no fresh official statement on the subject and only one important commentary, namely that by "Observer" in the *People's Daily* of the 16th of October following the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of the six principles. Observer described this development as a victory for Egypt who had thus obtained recognition of her incontrovertible sovereign rights. Britain, France and America had acted wisely in agreeing to respect Egyptian sovereignty but had attempted to take a retrograde step by asking the Security Council also to approve the 18-nation proposals. This manoeuvre had been defeated owing to the opposition of the Soviet and Yugoslav delegates at the Security Council and the way was therefore open for peaceful negotiations provided that Britain and France abandoned all intention of violating Egyptian sovereignty. Some further comment on these lines appeared during the following fortnight and there was no diminution in the space given by the newspapers to the subject.

3. After Israel's attack on Egypt an Observer article published on the 31st of October alleged that the attack had been made with the covert support and encouragement of the Western Powers—Britain, France and also, it was implied, the United States and Canada. Observer said that the Western Powers had prevaricated over the Suez Canal question and had at the same time encouraged Israel to attack Egypt, but their plot would fail because Jordan, Syria and Egypt had announced their intention of taking joint action in the event of military attack. Israel had been most unwise in her action which would be condemned by all peace-loving peoples and could be of benefit only to the Western Powers.

4. On the following day (the 1st of November) the Chinese Government made an official statement regarding Anglo-French intervention. This statement alleged that, having incited Israel to a large-scale armed attack on Egypt, Britain and France used this as an excuse to attempt an armed seizure of the Suez Canal zone. This was a grave provocation against all the peace-loving peoples of Asia, Africa and the world. The Chinese Government strongly condemned this act of naked aggression and resolutely supported the Egyptian people in their sacred struggle. The Arab countries and the countries of Asia and Africa would never allow a rule of colonialism to be imposed on Egypt once more and even in Britain and France peace-loving people would firmly oppose this unjust act of aggression. China firmly demanded that aggression should cease and that peaceful negotiations on the Suez Canal question should be opened without further delay. "If the British and French colonialists persist in going on headlong with their policy of aggression and war they will certainly have to reap the whirlwind." This official statement was followed up by an editorial in the *People's Daily* on the following day on much the same lines but including the allegation that the British and French attack on Egypt was partly the result of consistent American support on the Suez Canal question. All papers contained a mass of news about the Anglo-French action presented in the most hostile manner possible.

5. It was on the same day (the 2nd of November) that large-scale demonstrations were organised in Peking outside this Embassy. The demonstrations started in mid-morning with the arrival in organised marching bodies of a large

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number of groups whose leaders handed in protests on their behalf. Some of the earlier arrivals demanded to see me personally and I did receive the leaders of one of them while my Counsellor received a number of others. The remainder were content to deliver their protests to members of the Chancery who took it in turns to stand at the main gate (which was half open) in order to receive the delegations. On this day no one entered the Embassy compound except by permission and their actions were limited to noisy demonstrations and fist-shaking at the gate and to the decoration of the outside wall of the compound and of the Embassy gate with posters, slogans, caricatures, &c. During the afternoon loud-speakers arrived to relay the speeches of cheer-leaders and slogan-shouters; and after dark our gate and wall were floodlit to help the work of slogan-writers and bill-posters. The demonstrators were under strict discipline and although they made a great deal of noise in shouting hostile slogans they made no attempt to do any damage either to persons or to property. At an early stage I requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to afford any protection which might be necessary and, possibly in response to this request though more likely as a precaution taken by the organisers, a number of plain-clothes security policemen were posted at the Embassy gate in order to control the crowds. This they did with skill and efficiency. The demonstrations lasted from about 10.30 a.m. until about 8.30 p.m. with a brief lull at mid-day. During this time 100,000 people were said to have paraded past our gate, and I think this is probably no exaggeration.

6. On the 3rd of November the demonstrations were renewed at about 9 a.m. when the first arrivals at Her Majesty's Embassy were members of the staff of the *People's Daily* to the number of about 200. At the time of their arrival the main gate of the compound which is usually kept open during the day was shut and this must, I think, have provoked the demonstrators. When the gate was opened in response to the ringing and battering of the *People's Daily* demonstrators they surged right inside the compound and demanded that their leaders should be received by me. I duly received them and accepted the letter of protest which they delivered to me. In order to secure their withdrawal I was obliged to speak to the whole group of them stating that I had received their letter of protest and that I would forward it to Her Majesty's Government; they thereupon withdrew and there was no further attempt by any of the demonstrators to enter the compound. I enclose a translation<sup>(1)</sup> of the letter of protest which is in wording typical of the 1,800 or more protests so far received. The behaviour of the *People's Daily* delegation although excited and somewhat artificially menacing was not disorderly and they did not do any damage inside the compound. After their departure a few further contingents arrived and their leaders handed in protests, but for the rest of the morning and until late afternoon there was a lull. A mass meeting had been organised to start in the early afternoon and presumably all would-be demonstrators attended that.

7. The mass meeting took place in the Tien An Men Square and was attended, according to the Press by 400,000 people. The rabble-rousing speeches and the prolonged cheering of the crowd was plainly audible over the loud-speakers in most of central Peking. After it was over a procession marched for two or three hours past this Embassy and on to the Egyptian Embassy in order to demonstrate opposition to Anglo-French action and solidarity with the Egyptians. Once again the crowds were kept under tight control by plain-clothes security police outside the gate of the compound and no damage was done other than the further decoration of the outside wall and the gate. No attempt was made to interfere with the flag which remained flying over the gate throughout and nor was there any defacement of the Royal Arms. Similar mass meetings and demonstrations took place in all the major cities of China and at Shanghai Her Majesty's Consul-General received a delegation representing a mass rally of 100,000 people which had taken place there. I enclose a translation<sup>(1)</sup> of the protest handed in to Mr. Pullan by the delegation. Mr. Pullan reports that in Shanghai too the demonstrations were entirely orderly and no damage was done. Neither at Peking nor at Shanghai was any demonstration made outside the office of the French Consular Agent, presumably because the Chinese Government do not recognise them as representing the French Government.

8. Meanwhile at mid-day on the 3rd of November I had been summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Vice-Minister who handed to me the official protest of the Chinese Government against the "wanton aggression carried out

<sup>(1)</sup> Not printed.

by the British and French Governments in waging armed invasion against Egypt and threatening world peace." This protest, which I have already reported in my telegram No. 651, contains some extreme language and demands that the British and French Governments should immediately stop all armed attack against Egypt and should withdraw their armed forces at once. It demands that Israeli armed forces should also be withdrawn and the question of ensuring freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal should be settled by peaceful negotiation. We are warned that if these demands are ignored we shall be "faced with inestimable grave consequences."

9. Subsequent Press comment which has been voluminous and uniformly hostile, has naturally followed the same line as the official protest. In general the Chinese have given all-out verbal support to Egypt as well as to the attitude taken by the Soviet Government. However I detect a certain note of caution and a desire to await developments before they commit themselves to any specific action. Although there have been reports in the Chinese Press of volunteers presenting themselves in other Asian countries there has been so far no campaign here to revive the idea of Chinese volunteers which was current towards the end of September. The Chairman of the China Peace Committee, the elderly Mr. Kuo Mo-jo, who was one of those who on an earlier occasion expressed his resolve to volunteer, is still so far as I know pursuing his normal life in Peking. The Press has however reported a statement by the Egyptian Ambassador that he has had offers from over 250,000 Chinese to proceed to Egypt as volunteers.

10. At the time of writing the Chinese attitude is in some respects still obscure. On the one hand the Press of the 8th of November welcomed the cease-fire in Egypt as a victory for Egypt and the peace-loving peoples of the world and a direct consequence of the Soviet threat to intervene but on the other hand an official statement dated the 7th of November and issued on the 8th of November in response to the Egyptian appeal for volunteers and arms promises that "the Chinese Government and people are willing to adopt all effective measures within our ability, including the supply of material aid, to support Egypt's struggle." A committee has now been set up in order to co-ordinate the supply of aid. This same official statement appears to condemn the proposal for a United Nations force but the Press does not at present seem to be opposing the proposal itself, although it is opposing the latest proposal to set up two United Nations committees to deal respectively with the Israel-Arab dispute and with the Suez Canal. United States support of this proposal is roundly condemned in to-day's Press as an attempt to by-pass the main issue, that is to say the immediate withdrawal of Anglo-French forces. So far as I can judge the present Chinese attitude may be summed up as follows: full verbal support for Egypt together with such material aid as may be conveniently supplied with propaganda effect but without risk; general support of the Soviet attitude but with no specific Chinese commitment; and a desire to keep her own hands free to exploit the situation as best she can in the light of future developments.

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors in Paris, Washington, Moscow and Tel Aviv.

I have, &c.

C. O'NEILL.



VR 1091/992

No. 26

# THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST LEADING UP TO THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON EGYPT OF OCTOBER 29, 1956, AS SEEN FROM ISRAEL

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 27)*

(No. 152. Secret)

Tel Aviv,

Sir,

November 21, 1956.

Although the Israeli invasion of Sinai on the 29th of October has since been merged in events of wider scope and import, I think it may be useful to attempt to depict in a self-contained despatch the background to Israel's action and the course of the fighting up to the time of the Anglo-French intervention.

2. For some time the Israel Government had been convinced that Nasser was seeking to establish his hegemony over the Arab world. They knew that the main obstacle to his plans was the influence which Her Majesty's Government still enjoyed in Iraq and Jordan; and they saw very clearly that Nasser's best hope of eradicating that influence was to exploit the one emotion upon which all Arabs were united—namely, hostility to Israel. There was no lack of evidence to support the Israel Government's suspicion that, when the moment was ripe, Nasser would seek to unite the Arabs in a campaign for the extermination of Israel. Their suspicions turned to certainty when Nasser, no longer content with a virulent and effective propaganda campaign and economic pressure, turned to the Soviet Union for arms, and began to organise fedayeen attacks on Israel, not only from Egyptian territory but from the territory of Israel's other neighbours, Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon.

3. The Israel Government have stated that the main object of their attack on the 29th of October was to destroy fedayeen bases in Egyptian territory, but there is little doubt that the steady build-up of Soviet arms in Egypt and Syria, and the extension of Egyptian influence in Jordan, were additional reasons for seeking a show-down with Egypt before it was too late. They have never had any illusions about the long-term prospects of defending Israel's present frontiers if a concerted attack was planned and launched against her from the surrounding Arab territories.

4. The first recognisable wave of fedayeen entered Israel in December 1954 and January and February 1955, and

appeared to have as their object the disruption of Israeli settlement in the Negev. It immediately became apparent that for Nasser this was a highly profitable activity. Not only was it popular in Egypt and other Arab countries, but it even escaped censure in the rest of the world, where only Israel's reprisal on Gaza in February attracted notice and condemnation. After a pause during which, as it subsequently transpired, Nasser was negotiating the Soviet arms deal, a renewed wave of fedayeen was launched against the Negev in August 1955. It drew another Israeli reprisal, this time on Khan Yunis, which provided Nasser with a useful occasion for the public disclosure of his arms deal with the Soviet bloc and which again drew down a condemnation of Israel by the Security Council.

5. The effect of Soviet intervention in the area, immediately apparent, was to embolden Nasser and greatly reduce the deterrent effect of Israel's reprisals; two more sharp engagements had to be fought before Egypt withdrew its fedayeen and comparative quiet returned to the Negev. In scale the last of these reprisals became almost an operation of war and was launched against an Egyptian battalion whose foremost companies had dug in inside the Israeli frontier. Partial mobilisation in Israel had to be carried out three times as a precaution against Egyptian counter-attacks and the atmosphere became so tense that I predicted in October 1955 that if Egyptian provocation continued the next Israeli move might well be to launch a major attack on the Egyptian forces in Sinai with the object not of conquering territory but of causing the maximum damage to the enemy's formations and military stocks. I expected that they would then immediately withdraw behind the armistice lines in order to avoid military or other sanctions from the Tripartite Powers.

6. It became clear that Nasser was not yet ready to fight Israel. Diplomatic aggression temporarily took the place of fedayeen attacks and the next Egyptian moves were to negotiate a military agreement with Syria, as a first step to encircling Israel, and



to lay the foundations for a fedayeen organisation in Syria and Jordan. Simultaneously Nasser began in earnest to undermine the British position in Jordan, which was an obstacle to his plans. Mr. Ben-Gurion reacted sharply against Syria, but no further major incidents took place for three months. During this lull Egyptian harassing of Israeli border settlements continued, Soviet arms flowed into Egypt and Syria, General Glubb's downfall was plotted and achieved, and the fedayeen organisations were built up.

7. The strength of the new arrangements was shown in April when the Israelis allowed themselves to be provoked by an accumulation of serious frontier incidents into retaliatory shelling of the town of Gaza. Within a matter of hours about 180 fedayeen were launched from the Gaza Strip, 100 on short-range missions and the remaining 80 on deep penetrations which took them right through Israel into Jordan. There they were fêted by the Jordanian population and cared for, and flown out by the new Egyptian organisation in Jordan, working under their military attaché in Amman. This greatly enhanced Egyptian prestige in Jordan (portraits of Nasser in public places began, for instance, to outnumber those of King Hussein) and although much was still to happen before the establishment on the 24th of October of a joint military staff for Jordan, Egypt and Syria, the risk of Jordan falling under Egyptian domination was thrown into high prominence by the dissolution of the Jordanian Parliament on the 26th of June and by the prospect of a landslide in favour of Egypt when elections were held, as was constitutionally required, within the next four months.

8. Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal on the 12th of July made little immediate difference to Israeli policy, since the Canal was already closed to Israel shipping. In Jordan, however, it sent Nasser's prestige soaring to new heights, and for the next three months Nasser's struggle for power was centred on Jordan. Israel watched this situation developing with great anxiety and from the dissolution of the Jordan Parliament on the 26th of June onward there were grounds for fearing that Israel might be tempted to intervene militarily while the position was still fluid. Tension mounted in September and early October when a series of attacks from Jordan was followed by four progressively heavier Israeli reprisal raids, the last of which was a strong attack on the

police station at Kalkilya on the night of the 10th-11th of October. In the belief that these raids, which were indeed disproportionate to the injuries suffered by Israel, presaged an all-out military assault, the King of Jordan called on Iraq to station forces inside Jordan. Iraq's agreement to do so, and Her Majesty's Government's approval of their decision, caused alarm and indignation in Israel, where the Government, claiming that either Egyptian or Iraqi intervention in Jordan would represent a direct threat to the security of Israel, reserved their freedom of action. Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, acting on instructions, impressed on the Israel Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 12th of October that Her Majesty's Government could not accept that the entry of Iraqi troops into Jordan provided any justification for Israeli intervention in Jordan, and made it clear that Her Majesty's Government would fulfil their treaty obligations to Jordan in such circumstances. Although, owing to Iraqi-Jordanian differences of opinion about command arrangements, no Iraqi troops in fact entered Jordan at this time, the position in Jordan deteriorated further when pro-Egyptian parties made the expected gains at the general election on the 21st of October, and this was followed, as has already been mentioned in paragraph 7 above, by the signature of a joint military agreement between Jordan, Egypt and Syria.

9. Egypt during this period had avoided major provocation on the Israel-Egypt border, although fedayeen-type incidents still occurred, particularly in the neighbourhood of Mr. Ben-Gurion's home in Sde Beker. When heavy mobilisation began in Israel on the 26th of October, it was impossible therefore to forecast with any certainty what action, if any, the Israelis intended. Although it soon became clear that the major point of concentration was in the Negev, in a country as small as Israel this could give no certainty that an attack was not in fact about to be directed against Jordan, in which case it might be preceded by a rapid movement of these concentrations comparable to the manoeuvre carried out by Field-Marshal Montgomery at the battle of Alamein. If these concentrations proved to be more than a demonstration to warn Jordan and Egypt against the consequences of taking the new military agreement too seriously, the most likely possibilities appeared to be either a major raid upon Egyptian forces in Sinai (which

at the time were much reduced in number) on the lines of the swift punitive operation which I had forecast the previous year, or an attack upon Jordan designed to bring Israel's frontiers to the Jordan River line. Despite the firm warning already given to the Israel Government, it was widely believed in Israel that Her Majesty's Government would not in practice be willing or indeed able to bring effective assistance to Jordan in time to prevent the seizure of the Jordan River frontier. Accordingly, you instructed me to see the Foreign Minister, ask for an explanation of the measures undertaken by Israel, to repeat the warning already given of our intention to assist Jordan in the event of an Israeli aggression and to seek an assurance that no hostile move against Jordan was contemplated. As I reported in my telegram No. 875 of the 29th of October, Mrs. Meir gave me this assurance; she added that the threatening situation in the Middle East resulting from Egypt's aggressive plans had obliged Israel to take certain precautionary measures, but that the scope of Israel's mobilisation had been exaggerated.

10. At 7.15 p.m. on the same day my Service Attachés were told by an official of the Ministry of Defence that Israeli forces had entered Egyptian territory earlier that day and that a public announcement would be made at 9 p.m. They learnt that paratroopers had been successfully dropped about 20 miles east of the town of Suez. A light division had crossed the border on a broad front between El Auja and Elath which was expected to link up with the paratroopers within a few hours. They were told that the object was to reach the Canal and to fight only if resistance was encountered. Two hours later the first public announcement was made; it said that Israeli forces had attacked fedayeen bases in Egyptian territory and taken up positions near Nakhl on the approaches to the Suez Canal.

11. Israeli intentions were by no means clear at this stage. Egypt's military dispositions were such that the Israelis could hope to defeat the whole Egyptian army in detail, crossing the Canal when the enemy forces in Sinai and Gaza had been sufficiently neutralised. On the other hand, their losses in doing so would be likely to be substantial and very keenly felt. It was quite possible therefore that the Israelis hoped that their action would precipitate Allied intervention which, though aimed at

securing a cease-fire, would serve Israeli purposes by neutralising Nasser. If, however, the attack had not gone well or the Allies had not intervened, the Israelis might have converted their action into a wide sweep in Egyptian territory in order to cause as much damage as possible to fedayeen bases and military installations and then to withdraw. But it was by no means possible to take this for granted, particularly because the Israelis admitted that paratroopers had already dropped quite close to the Suez Canal and indeed had said that their objective was to reach it. When one of my Service Attachés asked the chief army spokesman what the ultimate aim of the operation was, the spokesman said that he could not say, "but," he added, pointing to the map, "there is Cairo."

12. On instructions from you, and in view of the seriousness of the Israel attack, I issued a general warning to British subjects to leave Israel unless they had compelling reasons to remain. The Israel Government announced that full air raid precautions were to come into effect at once and there was every indication that widespread hostilities might begin.

13. The Israelis' advance into Sinai continued rapidly on the 30th October, although at the time almost no further information concerning its progress was available. That afternoon the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, announced to the House of Commons that, in view of the seriousness of the conflict between Israel and Egypt, the British and French Governments had appealed to the Security Council to discuss the matter at an emergency meeting. Meanwhile, in order quickly to stop the fighting, they had issued a joint ultimatum to both the Israel and Egypt Governments calling on them to stop fighting, withdraw 10 miles from the Canal and allow Anglo-French forces to occupy the Suez Canal Zone. These steps were to be taken within twelve hours; if they were not, the two Governments would intervene in whatever strength was necessary in order to secure compliance. The Prime Minister explained that this measure had been taken in order to stop the fighting quickly, to separate the belligerents, to protect vital British and international interests in the Suez Canal and as a first step to the establishment of a permanent peace in the Middle East.

14. The appropriate communications had been made to the Israeli and Egyptian missions in London but, as it happened, the



communication from the Israel Chargé d'Affaires to his Government was delayed somewhere between London and Tel Aviv, where the Foreign Minister was spending the night. When this delay came to my notice, I authorised a member of my staff to read over the Anglo-French ultimatum to the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Arthur Lourie, who was with her. He telephoned within an hour to state the terms of his Government's reply (see my telegrams Nos. 598 and 599 of the 31st of October) in which they agreed to the conditions laid down on the assumption that the Egyptians would also make a "positive response." However, Egypt refused to agree to the terms of the communication, even after the Prime Minister had issued what was in effect a further

warning to Egypt in the House of Commons on the 31st of October. That night, Anglo-French air forces began the systematic bombardment of Egyptian airfields, and the fighting between Israel and Egypt became merely one facet, and that not the most important, of a series of events whose repercussions are not yet spent. I will describe the course of subsequent events in a further despatch.

15. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Beirut, Bagdad, Washington, Ankara and Paris, to the Permanent Representative at the United Nations and to the Political Office with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

JOHN NICHOLLS.

VR 1115/3

No. 27

## THE EFFECT OF THE SINAI CAMPAIGN ON ISRAEL'S ECONOMY

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received December 5)

(No. 155 E. Confidential) Tel Aviv,  
Sir, November 29, 1956.

I have the honour in this despatch to offer some observations on the effects upon the Israeli economy of the campaign in the Sinai Peninsula earlier this month. Although brief and successful, and rewarded by the capture of considerable military stores, the campaign could only be sustained by an all-out war effort which starved the normal civilian economy for several weeks and is still keeping it on short commons.

2. The immediate cost of the operations is estimated at about £1.50 million (£10 million sterling) or about 6½ per cent. of the Ordinary Budget for 1956. The resulting economic dislocation will certainly cost much more. To a country engaged in social, industrial and public works programmes that would tax the efforts of much wealthier nations, and grappling still with the resettlement problems of 750,000 recent immigrants the consequences of even a successful *blitzkrieg* are bound to be grave.

3. On the home front, the country's services and economic institutions stood up quite well during the emergency. Food distribution proved generally adequate after some initial dislocation due not to the shortage of supplies, but to lack of transport called up to supplement military vehicles. Stringent penalties were introduced for over-charging and there seems to have been little retail profiteering. Factory production is estimated, perhaps optimistically, to have been maintained at between 50 per cent. and 75 per cent. during the period of full mobilisation. Although only partial mobilisation is now in force and factories and businesses have recovered most of their key staff, production may not increase substantially, if at all, until supplies of heavy fuel oil improve.

4. One of the first casualties of the campaign appears to have been American financial aid. As a result of the United States Administration's displeasure at the unilateral Israeli action in the Sinai desert projected, but as yet uncommitted, American assistance to Israel, including the

further supply of surplus agricultural commodities repayable in local currency, is reported to have been suspended. The Export-Import Bank loan of \$75 million on which the Israelis had been counting to pursue their urgently needed water development programme and which was reported to be on the point of signature, has likewise been postponed. On the other hand reports of a freezing of private Jewish contributions and Israeli Bond issues in the United States are apparently without foundation. Israel expects to receive over \$100 million from these sources this year and blockage of these funds might have proved disastrous to the economy. Most of the fifty or so United States Operations Mission experts have temporarily left the country.

5. Black market rates for the dollar and pound sterling have risen, but not excessively. The weekly currency situation reports of the Bank of Israel have been suspended ostensibly for security reasons. They would if published no doubt reveal a substantial increase in the bank note circulation and of some drain on the foreign currency reserves; and the Bank may hope to diminish currency speculation by withholding figures until the situation is more stable. Retail price increases have been negligible so far, but it is obvious that the economy will generally be subjected shortly to a renewal of severe inflationary pressure. The Bank of Israel and the Government are doing their best to resist the heavy demand for more credit but, since this was already very short before the emergency, some concession will no doubt have to be made if only to avoid further private dealing at exorbitant rates of interest.

6. The Government have so far confined themselves to the issue of a voluntary Defence Loan and the imposition of various indirect taxes, which will not affect the cost-of-living index. In brief, the measures so far adopted comprise:—

- (i) An £1.40 million Security Loan consisting of Bearer Bonds paying 4½ per cent. tax free interest, Registered Bonds paying 6½ per cent. subject to



25 per cent. income tax, and Lottery Bonds without interest. The Interest-Bearing Bonds are to be linked to the dollar or to the cost-of-living index at the buyer's option. The Lottery Bonds will be linked to the dollar only and prizes will be exempt from tax.

- (ii) An increase in stamp duties to raise £1.5 million and an increase in postage rates to raise £1.4 million.
- (iii) A tax on bus and taxi fares and on private cars, to raise £1.5 million and a surcharge on telephone bills to raise £1.1.5 million.
- (iv) An increase in the tax on foreign travel to raise £1.1 million.

7. Petrol rationing is not at present contemplated, but a zoning system for private cars is likely shortly to be introduced. Private motor transport absorbs only 3 per cent. of the country's annual fuel consumption which last year was just under 1½ million tons (representing a higher *per capita* consumption than for the United Kingdom). Fuel oil accounted for nearly 60 per cent. of the total, the main consumers being industry and agriculture at over 30 per cent. and electric power at about 25 per cent. Domestic oil wells so far tapped do not yet yield 10 per cent. of total requirements and, while substantial stocks of motor fuel are reported to have been captured from the Egyptians, it is difficult to see how the needs of industry and generating plant are going to be met without a substantial curtailment of production. Stringent economies have already been imposed on domestic, public and industrial power consumption.

8. On the export front, citrus should not be materially affected. A good crop of about last season's size is likely and owing

to the effects of this year's frost on the Spanish groves, foreign prices are expected to remain favourable. The diamond cutting and polishing industry, which supplies Israel's second most important export, should not suffer either since it is virtually independent of fuel oil. Most of the other industrial export items are likely to be more or less affected, particularly cement, chemicals and metal manufactures. The future of the Suez Canal is still too obscure for the Israelis to count on using it unhindered once it is reopened, but there is a strong feeling that the Egyptians must not be allowed, by denying the Gulf of Aqaba again to Israeli shipping, once more to separate Israel from her natural export markets in Africa and the East.

9. In general, I think it is fair to say that the current economic situation, while uncertain and disturbing, does not represent anything radically new for Israel which has virtually, since its inception, had to contend with frontier incidents and other pressure, threats of invasion and a form of economic warfare. I hope that the unsettled condition of the region and more especially that of Israel's neighbouring countries will not be allowed to reduce more than is absolutely necessary official assistance to British exporters ready to take advantage of this not enormous, but quite useful and indeed relatively stable export market. Substantial orders available to Britain will otherwise certainly go to our competitors who are showing themselves very ready to take advantage of these opportunities.

10. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Commercial Relations and Exports Department, Export Credits Guarantee Department of the Board of Trade and to Her Majesty's Treasury.

I have, &c.

JOHN NICHOLLS.

VR 1091/1044

No. 28

# AN ACCOUNT OF THE ISRAELI CAMPAIGN IN SINAI, AND CONNECTED EVENTS, OCTOBER 29-NOVEMBER 7

*Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received December 17)*

(No. 161. Secret)  
Sir,

*Tel Aviv,  
December 13, 1956.*

In my despatch No. 152 of the 21st of November I described the background of the attack launched by Israel on the 29th of October against the Egyptian forces in Sinai and the course of the fighting up to the Anglo-French intervention on the night of the 31st of October. To bring the narrative up to date without embarking on a complete history of the Suez crisis with all its international complications is by no means easy; for events in Israel from the 31st of October onwards were largely conditioned by the international repercussions of the Anglo-French intervention. I will nevertheless try in the present despatch to provide a coherent account of the later stages of the Sinai campaign, as seen from Israel, and to confine within the narrowest possible limits my references to events in the international arena.

## The Military Campaign

2. In the two and a half days of the Israeli campaign which preceded the Allied attacks on Egyptian airfields, the Israelis had already struck decisive blows against the Egyptian forces in Sinai, and this at very little cost to themselves. On the first night (October 29-30) one infantry brigade broke through the entrenched Egyptian positions at Kuntilla, while a second attacked and overran Ras el Naqb (near Elath). On the 30th of October a third brigade attacked Qusaima, opposite the El Auja demilitarised zone, while the first two advanced into the heart of Sinai. One column by-passed the Egyptian positions at Nekhl (or El Nakhl) and reached the paratroopers dropped east of the Mitla Pass, on the other side of the desert, some thirty kilometres from Suez; the other dealt with the opposition at Nekhl. On the 31st of October these two forces mopped up and consolidated, while the brigade which had captured Qusaima advanced on the enemy's strong defensive positions at Abu Ageila. Here they were held down, but an armoured brigade was thrown in and captured the Egyptian positions from the rear, after the first really

stiff battle of the campaign. (Unfortunately, in the course of the encircling movement, one group of Israeli tanks met another coming up from the opposite direction and before proper identification was established nine Israeli Shermans had been destroyed.) At the same time, part of this Israel armoured brigade pressed down the road towards Bir Hamma on the road to Ismailia. Similar penetrations were made towards the north to take the main Egyptian defences along the coast from the flank and rear and to prevent the escape of the considerable Egyptian forces in the area of the Gaza Strip and its hinterland. Meanwhile the Israeli air force kept up a steady stream of attacks with bomb, cannon, rocket and napalm on Egyptian positions and vehicle movement. An Egyptian armoured brigade which was moving up to meet the Israelis was decimated by such air attack well before it could engage its enemy.

3. The Allied bombing of Egyptian air bases which began on the night of the 31st of October did not lead to any significant acceleration of the Israeli advance. Egyptian air activity had been comparatively slight from the beginning and despite the relatively longer distances from its airfields, the Israeli air force maintained a fair margin of air supremacy. The main effect of the Allied action was not therefore felt so much in the Sinai as in Tel Aviv and Israel's other towns, where fear of bombing by Egypt's Ilyushins was acute. Thus, while it is likely that Israeli losses in Sinai would have been somewhat heavier and Israeli morale lower had not Egypt's air force been largely destroyed on the ground, it must remain a matter of speculation whether the course of military operations would have been radically changed if the Egyptian air force had not been put out of action by the Allied air attacks. It is relevant to note that there was no evidence of any Ilyushin bomber taking off to attack Israel in the period before the Allied intervention. The Allied destruction of military targets other than airfields and aircraft on the ground made little difference in Sinai because Nasser had already begun to withdraw his forces from the area.



4. If the pace of the Israeli advance did not appreciably increase after the Allied bombing, it was swift none the less. On the 1st of November the Israelis overran the Bir Hamma Area, taking the airfield, and went on to capture Bir Gifgafa, half-way on the road from Nitzana to Ismailia, after a tank battle. The next day, the 2nd of November, another armoured group struck north to capture El Arish with its extensive dumps of Soviet arms. Another cut off the Gaza Strip at Rafah after a concerted bombardment from land, sea and air. The Egyptians were now in full flight, abandoning their vehicles and then their boots, and taking off into the sand dunes in thousands. The town of Gaza surrendered quickly after an infantry attack on the same day; valuable mediation was performed by United Nations observers on the spot. The Israel authorities had warned the population of the Strip by radio and leaflet to remain calm and to stay at home. This injunction seems to have been obeyed and civilian casualties in the area were slight, although a certain amount of sporadic resistance was encountered in the Strip for several days. Fedayeen escaping to Jordan caused some damage, particularly in the south, where several people were killed in mining and shooting incidents and several important water pipes were blown up. Even now the search for escaping fedayeen is not over.

5. By the 3rd of November the defeat of the Egyptian forces in the Sinai was almost complete. The remains of their armour had retired to some fifteen miles from Ismailia, and their two infantry divisions were making for the Canal Zone in a disorderly retreat which, under heavy air attack, now became a rout. While the Israeli forces in the north pursued the demoralised enemy with infantry transported in Tel Aviv's buses, other units moved southwards from the Mitla Pass and down the east side of Sinai to occupy Ras Nuzrani and Sharm el Sheikh. These objectives were attained without opposition on the 4th of November, thus completing the conquest of Sinai in the short space of six days.

#### The Political Background

6. These events took place against a background of intense and often confused political activity. Israel, as I have reported in my despatch No. 152 of the 21st of November, immediately accepted the Anglo-French ultimatum of the 30th of October and, except possibly for a few

patrols, her forces were scrupulously held this side of the stipulated line ten miles from the Canal. The press and public welcomed with a sort of shocked admiration and delight the news that the United Kingdom and France had decided to intervene militarily to safeguard the Canal from the effects of Israel-Egyptian hostilities and the Anglo-French veto of the condemnatory resolutions tabled in the Security Council by the United States and the Soviet Union. An incipient tendency to assume that the Allies and Israel were embarking as allies on a common struggle against a common enemy was salutarily checked by Sir Anthony Eden's statement on the 31st of October that Her Majesty's Government did not condone Israel's action and that, once the Anglo-French intervention had brought hostilities to an end, Israel should withdraw her forces. What remained was a sense of profound relief that, whatever the precise relationship between the Israeli action and our own might be, Israel in practice no longer stood alone. The fact that our intervention took a form which virtually assured Israel immunity from air bombardment naturally contributed to this sense of relief; but it was not, I think, such a significant factor as the elation which was universally felt at the prospect of emerging from so long a period of political and moral isolation.

7. I need not describe here the proceedings of the Special Assembly of the United Nations at which, in a series of resolutions, the vast majority of Member States condemned the Israeli attack on Sinai and the Allied intervention, and sought to secure a cease-fire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces. These debates were indeed closely followed in Israel, where the Government at least, and to some extent public opinion, realised that international pressure was mounting and would sooner or later become irresistible. But attention was mainly directed to the swift progress of the military campaign in Sinai and, above all, to the impending Allied landings in the Canal Zone. Already, on the 1st of November, the press had reported that invasion fleets were converging on both ends of the Canal. As the days passed, it was with increasing anxiety and bewilderment that Israelis, official and private, read or heard successive communiqués from the Allied Headquarters reporting more successful air strikes but not the looked-for landings. Many undoubtedly thought that the Allies were weakening under United Nations pressure.

The Foreign Minister, seeking enlightenment, which I could not give, more than once spoke as if our failure to occupy the Suez Canal Zone was exposing Israel's forces in Sinai to unnecessary risks. (The Israelis were almost obsessively concerned to minimise casualties.) The implication seemed to be that Israeli forces, unless screened from Egyptian reinforcements, would have to occupy bridgeheads over the Suez Canal merely for their own safety. Militarily speaking, this might well have been necessary if the Egyptians had come to believe that Anglo-French forces would not, after all, intervene on land, for they would then have been free to divert their remaining forces, probably over one-half of their army, to Sinai. Hence the prospect of fierce fighting over the Canal itself was by no means past. Furthermore, if an Egyptian counter-attack had had any success, the other Arab States would no doubt have overcome their reluctance to intervene and thus widened the area of conflict. Lastly, continued hostilities would have given the Russians a pretext to send volunteers, if they were so minded, a danger of which Israel was fully aware.

8. Meanwhile, at the United Nations, the Egyptians had said they were prepared to agree to a cease-fire provided that the attacking armies did not "continue their aggression"—a proviso which was held to mean that Israel must withdraw from Sinai. Her Majesty's Government and the French Government, for their part, offered on the 3rd of November to stop military action on certain conditions, including the constitution of a United Nations force to separate the combatants and consent to the landing of Anglo-French forces until the United Nations force was ready to take over. Israel's representative at the United Nations next day agreed to an immediate cease-fire but did not offer to comply with the Assembly's injunction that Israel should withdraw her forces from Sinai. The Assembly thereupon passed a further resolution calling for an unconditional cease-fire and the immediate withdrawal of forces; and the Secretary-General called on the parties to notify him of their acceptance within a few hours. Although Egypt at once accepted this, the Israel Government could not at first bring themselves to do so until the Egyptians had clarified their future policy towards Israel. They therefore replied by asking a series of questions which, however pertinent from the point of view of Israel's future, were described by

the Secretary-General of the United Nations—not unreasonably in the circumstances—as impertinent. When, next day, they confirmed their willingness to accept an unconditional cease-fire, it was already too late; for in the early hours of the 5th of November Anglo-French paratroopers had landed in Port Said and Port Fuad and were shortly to be reinforced by massive sea-borne forces. Meanwhile, the Assembly had endorsed a Canadian proposal for the formation of a United Nations force.

9. By this time, as I have already recounted, the fighting in Sinai was over. What had begun as a local war was now fairly and squarely an issue between the Great Powers, with the United States and the Soviet Union vying with each other—though for different motives—in efforts to stop Allied operations and secure the earliest possible withdrawal of Allied and Israeli forces. On the 5th of November the Israeli Prime Minister received from M. Bulganin a note couched in such intemperate terms that, as he subsequently told me, he would have thought that it was Hitler's handiwork if he had not first looked at the signature. Though neither this nor Mr. Ben-Gurion's reply was at first made public, fears of Soviet intervention were already widespread; and they were only partially relieved when, on the 6th of November, with their forces firmly established at the northern end of the Canal, the British and French Governments (followed by the Governments of Egypt and Israel) announced that they would cease-fire at midnight. When the Knesset met on the 7th, Mr. Ben-Gurion was—despite the violence of Soviet threats—in defiant mood, so far as withdrawal from Sinai was concerned; he declared that the Armistice Agreement with Egypt no longer existed, that Israel was ready to negotiate peace with Egypt or any of her other Arab neighbours, but that in no circumstances would Israel allow United Nations forces to be stationed in her territory or in any of the areas she had occupied. Plainly—though he did not say so—it was his intention to hold on to Sinai as a means of extracting either peace terms from Egypt or the promise of a satisfactory settlement from the United Nations.

10. On the same day, the 7th of November, the newly-elected President Eisenhower sent a letter to Mr. Ben-Gurion asking Israel to withdraw from Egyptian territory. Owing to a breakdown in communications between the State Department



and Tel Aviv, this was not delivered until the afternoon of the 8th. The President's request was no doubt precipitated by alarmist reports of the stepping up of Soviet aid to Egypt and Syria and the Soviet threat to send volunteers. (The State Department announced for instance that 125 M.I.Gs were stationed on Syrian airfields, although their origin was not known.) Late that night Mr. Ben-Gurion, after consultation with the heads of all political parties except the Communists, made a broadcast statement in which he revealed his replies to the letters from M. Bulganin and President Eisenhower. The jubilant confidence of the previous day had gone. To M. Bulganin, he said, he had made it clear that the Soviet Union had failed to recognise Egypt's perennial and intense hostility in word and action towards Israel. To President Eisenhower he had said that Israel would agree to his request that Israel should withdraw her forces when satisfactory arrangements for a United Nations police force in the Canal Zone had been reached. This dramatic reversal of the sanguine and determined stand he had taken a bare twenty-four hours earlier he announced with barely concealed emotion and regret.

11. The newspapers next morning accepted the Government's decision to withdraw from Sinai as a painful but inevitable one. They maintained that the fundamental reasons for the decision had been irresistible United States pressure combined with (and probably derived from) powerful Soviet threats. The public took the decision more philosophically than I, and most other foreign observers, would have believed possible. It was generally held that President Eisenhower had threatened to cut off all aid to Israel, private as well as official, and to secure Israel's expulsion from the United Nations if she did not agree to withdraw her forces from Egyptian territory. This may well be true; certainly the pressure exerted on Mr. Ben-Gurion must have been much heavier than the terms of President Eisenhower's letter indicated.

12. I need not, I think, describe here the course of events between Israel's decision to withdraw and the first significant withdrawal of troops on the 3rd of December. The process is not completed, and the question whether Israel is to evacuate also the Gaza Strip and the Island of Tiran—which she

annexed on the 6th of November—is, apparently with the tacit consent of all parties (including Mr. Hammarskjöld), still unresolved. But, instead of bringing the chronicle of events up to date, I think it may be useful to conclude this despatch with a few paragraphs on some particular aspects of the Sinai campaign.

### Arab Solidarity

13. Given the background of hostility between Iraq and Egypt, it is not perhaps surprising that the Arab world did not spring as one man to the defence of Egypt. But that no single Arab State should have given any effective help at all is another matter, and one to which a few words, from the point of view of this post, should be devoted. Plainly, Her Majesty's Government's main interest was to prevent the conflict spreading and, above all, to keep our Arab allies, Iraq and Jordan, from embroiling themselves. In practice, the problem was to help the Government of Iraq to keep its public opinion under control, and to frighten the Jordan authorities out of any idea of giving armed support to Egypt. The first requirement was to disassociate our own action as far as possible from that of Israel. Hence the firm statement of Sir Anthony Eden on the night of the 31st of October, to which I have already referred, warning Israel that Her Majesty's Government would press for the withdrawal of Israel forces from Sinai. (Subsequent statements on the same lines, and in particular one by the Foreign Office spokesman which was misreported to imply that we intended to evict Israel from Sinai by force, caused a good deal of indignation in Israel.) The second requirement was to make sure that the Israelis, already flushed with victory, did not themselves provoke an extension of the fighting by imprudent behaviour on their other frontiers. On several occasions I urged Mrs. Meir to ensure that Israel troops should give no possible pretext for Jordanian intervention. She assured me that Israel would only fight if attacked and agreed under pressure that a mere frontier incident or unpremeditated minor attack would not be taken as evidence of Jordanian aggression. On the 1st of November, I urged her, on your instructions, to announce publicly that Israel would not extend hostilities to the other Arab States unless they attacked first. She agreed, and such an announcement,

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admittedly couched in somewhat harsh terms, was made later in the day and broadcast in Arabic throughout the night.

14. Meanwhile, apart from brave words, no Arab help came to Egypt. Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia contented themselves with breaking off diplomatic relations with France and the last two with Britain also. The Lebanon did neither. Despite this initial failure of the Arab States to come to Egypt's assistance and the success of the Israeli forces, there remained a clear danger of the war spreading. The Egyptian Commander-in-Chief, Hakim Amer, had asked for Jordan to attack Israel, using Iraqi and Syrian troops in addition to her own. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Amman reported that King Hussein was furious, if not hysterical, and might order an attack on Israel despite Ali Abu Nuwar's opposition. Her Majesty's Government and the Iraqi Government therefore used all their influence to deter Jordan from attacking Israel, in particular by pointing out that in that event Her Majesty's Government would not be bound to go to Jordan's assistance under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty. Iraq also tried to restrain Syria. Together with Syria, she and later Saudi Arabia moved a certain number of troops into Jordanian territory in order to give the Jordanians greater steadiness in the face of what the latter took to be a threat of imminent Israeli attack.

15. On the 2nd of November, on instructions, I again strongly warned the Israel Government not to attack Jordan. Later in the day, Mrs. Meir asked to see me, and emphasised—though not, I thought, with any real anxiety—her concern about these Arab troop movements. Israel, she said, had no hostile intentions towards any of the other Arab States; but she had always been in a position to meet attacks from them and was even better prepared to do so now that she could redeploy her southern army, strengthened with Russian tanks, to other borders. If Israel were attacked, she would not hesitate to attack Jordan or Syria herself. If she were not attacked, she would remain quiet.

16. In this uneasy state Israel's relations with her eastern and northern neighbours remained until, with the cease-fire at midnight on the 6th of November, the immediate danger of Arab intervention appeared to have passed. There is some evidence that, when their defeat in Sinai was already obvious, the Egyptian author-

ities made a virtue of necessity and advised their Syrian and Jordanian partners to refrain from a military intervention which they then had no intention of making. The Egyptians probably recommended them to concentrate on fedayeen activities instead, but such activities were, and have remained, on a relatively insignificant scale. All in all, it seems likely that the feebleness of Arab reactions will have increased Israel's contempt for the military prowess of her neighbours and, by the same token, the latter's bitterness against Israel. It should be added, however, that official circles showed remarkable understanding of the difficulties of Nuri Said's position. Even the statement of the 13th of November in which the Iraqi Government proposed the liquidation of Israel as the only solution to the Palestine problem was taken fairly calmly. Much more weight was attached to Nuri's efforts to open the eyes of his fellow-Arabs to the dangers of Soviet penetration.

### Israeli Morale

17. The speed and dash with which the Sinai campaign was conducted is sufficient evidence of the high morale of the Israeli forces. It can be argued that it was too high; some of the more experienced officers believe that the impetuosity to which this gave rise often led to errors of judgment which would have cost the Israeli forces very dearly had their opponents not been so inept. I have already mentioned Israel's self-inflicted losses in the wasteful tank battle at Abu Ageila. Another example occurred at the Mitla Pass where with imprudent nerve Israel's paratroop battalion neglected to dig in properly in preparation for Egyptian air attack, which therefore had some success for a short while. The Israelis will no doubt learn a great deal from their experience, and their senior officers are already throwing cold water on any idea that the army is invincible.

18. On the civilian side morale was also, though more surprisingly, high. Civil defence discipline was very good. There was virtually no run on the banks or the food shops, and the inconveniences and hardships resulting from wholesale mobilisation of men and vehicles were cheerfully borne. My impression is that the Government's decision to take action against Egypt released many of the inner tensions to which the frustrations of recent years had given rise in Israeli minds and which, it

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must be submitted, often made private and official dealings with them highly disagreeable. Manners improved as if by magic; there was no trace of the bloodthirstiness so apparent at the time of major reprisal raids in recent years; and jubilation at military successes never degenerated into jingoism. The decision to withdraw from Sinai was, as I have indicated above, received with a calm and dignity of which I should not have expected Israelis to be capable.

### The Collusion Story

19. It was natural that the Arab States should have suspected that the Israeli attack on Sinai and the Allied intervention designed to halt it east of the Canal were part of a concerted plan. That the same suspicion should have been widely held in the United States as well as in the United Kingdom and elsewhere needs a word of explanation. It was argued that Israel would not have dared to launch her attack without prior assurance of Allied, or at least French, support. To support this *a priori* reasoning, those who opposed the Israeli attack or the Allied intervention or both quickly adduced facts, real and imaginary. In the former category were the receipt of French armaments prior to the attack; the arrival of a squadron of French aircraft at Lydda, where no attempt was made to conceal their presence; and the arrival of three French destroyers at Haifa. All these can be explained without postulating Franco-Israeli collusion; they prove that French sympathies were with Israel, which was already common knowledge, and they suggest that France would have helped to defend Israel if serious Egyptian attacks from the air or by sea had developed. Neither the aircraft nor the destroyers, to the best of my belief, took any part in the Israeli campaign. Of the imaginary evidence freely retailed by press and agency correspondents, I need only say that one such, when asked by a colleague if he really intended to telegraph as fact such a farrago of unsubstantiated rumours, replied: "Collusion stories are what they want, and collusion stories are what they're going to get." The *Manchester Guardian* report of the 20th of November has since been proved to be a mixture of inaccurate observation and dishonest reporting.

20. So far from admitting collusion, many Israeli senior officers go so far as to say that the Allied intervention was a sad misfortune since it led the Egyptians to withdraw forces from Sinai instead of reinforcing them, with the result that the Israelis were able to destroy only a third rather than an expected two-thirds of their army. The same people argue that the Egyptians would not have dared to raid Israeli towns for fear of the chaos that even minor reprisal raids on Cairo might have caused.

### The Future

21. This despatch is already over-long, and I will not attempt to draw up a profit and loss account or to speculate on Israel's chances of salving some of her war-aims from the wreckage of her victory. She has enhanced her military prestige, destroyed and captured much of her chief enemy's war material, opened the route to Eilat and, at the worst, secured a temporary respite from Egyptian harassing and the dangers of a concerted Arab attack. Whether this is the sum total of her gains, whether they will prove to be of lasting value and whether they will in any case be offset by damage to her economy and the deterioration of her international position are questions to which no answer is possible while the fate of the entire area is still in doubt. What seems certain is that the chances of a durable peace with her neighbours, slight though they have always been, have receded still further—largely as a result of the insistence of the United Nations on an unconditional withdrawal of forces. But for the superlative leadership of Mr. Ben-Gurion and his own grim sense of realities, it may be doubted whether Israel would have accepted the decision to withdraw from Sinai with so little in the way of reassurance for the future.

22. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Ankara, Paris and Washington, to the Political Office with the Middle East Forces and to the United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations in New York.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.

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No. 29

## ISRAEL: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Sir John Nicholls to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 18)

(No. 74. Confidential) *Tel Aviv,*  
Sir, *June 13, 1956.*

In accordance with the instructions in your despatch No. 127 of the 14th of December, 1944, I have the honour to enclose my annual report on the Heads of Foreign Missions in Israel.

I have, &c.

J. W. NICHOLLS.

### Enclosure

(Passages marked with an asterisk are reproduced from previous reports)

#### Argentina

Dr. Gregorio Topolevsky, Ambassador (February 8, 1956).

Dr. Topolevsky studied medicine in Germany before the war and practised as a doctor until taking this, his first, diplomatic post. He is a Jew, like his predecessor, and unmarried. His English and French are rudimentary and his "German" is nearly all Yiddish; but he contrives to be a cheerful and agreeable companion.

#### Austria

Dr. K. H. Enderl, Chargé d'Affaires (May 8, 1956).

Dr. Enderl had been the Austrian Consul-General since March 1955. He may well be moved when a Minister is finally appointed. He is a friendly colleague and markedly pro-British. His rather brassy wife has more jewellery than discretion, but is pleasant enough in her own eccentric way.

#### Belgium

M. Amaury Holvoet, Minister (November 22, 1955).

M. Holvoet was Counsellor at the Belgian Embassy in London until a few years ago and was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until his appointment here. He is accompanied by his charming wife and by two teenage daughters.

#### Brazil

M. Nelson Tabajara de Oliveira, Minister (December 8, 1954).

\*M. Tabajara was born at Avaré in the State of São Paulo in 1904. He joined the Brazilian Foreign Service in 1931 and has since served in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Montevideo, Yokohama, Buenos Aires, Chicago and Bogotá. Before his appointment to Tel Aviv he was in charge of the Consular Division of the Foreign Ministry.

\*This is M. Tabajara's first post as Minister. He is friendly and sociable, but somewhat overshadowed by his wife. He speaks reasonable English. His wife, whom he met in Hong Kong and who is of Portuguese origin, was educated at English schools

and speaks English fluently. Both are keen bridge-players and like to be seen at the right functions. (Written in 1955.)

#### Bulgaria

M. Guéorgui Zengulekov, Minister (August 16, 1954).

\*M. Zengulekov is a young man, probably under 40. Heavily built and swarthy, his appearance is against him; but he improves on acquaintance. Despite poor French and no English, he enjoys parties and can be quite good company. Formerly a trade union official, this is his first venture into diplomacy. His wife speaks only Bulgarian, but is learning Russian. (Written in 1955.)

#### Burma

Mr. Khin Maung Gale, Chargé d'Affaires (May 16, 1955).

\*Formerly Chargé d'Affaires in Belgrade, where he opened the first Burmese Legation, Mr. Khin Maung Gale arrived here in May 1955 to perform the same role and to prepare the visit of his Prime Minister to Israel. Friendly and shrewd. (Written in 1955.)

His wife and children are in Burma, but he expects them to join him soon.

#### Chile

Dr. Samuel Avendano Sepulvedo, Minister (June 16, 1953).

\*In his late 50's, Dr. Sepulvedo comes from Valparaiso, where he was a leading physician and President of the Agrarian Labour Party. He has no previous diplomatic experience. Dr. Sepulvedo, who is also accredited as Ambassador to Turkey, is rarely seen in Israel, and I have not yet met him. He leaves the Legation in charge of M. Eduardo Cristi, an elderly and depressed Minister-Counsellor with a large family. (Written in 1955.)

#### Cuba

M. Alberto de la Campa Roff, Minister (November 9, 1955).

M. de la Campa Roff is also Ambassador in Rome, where he resides. A career diplomat, he has served in Stockholm, Madrid and Washington, where his father is the Cuban Ambassador. He paid a brief visit to Israel to present his credentials and then left the Legation in charge of M. David Ferdman, a Jewish, but not Israeli, business man with interests in Belgium and Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, Cuba.

#### Czechoslovakia

M. Zdenek Jobanek, Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.* (September 23, 1954).

\*Born in June 1922, M. Jobanek has not called on me and makes no particular impression. (Written in 1955.)

#### Denmark

M. Hugo Hergel, Minister (March 17, 1955).

\*M. Hergel is also Danish Minister to Greece and Turkey, and normally resides in Ankara. He is a career diplomat and has served as Minister in Bucharest and Moscow, where I knew him. His



wife is English. Both speak fluent French and M. Hergel's English is almost perfect. A pleasant couple, whom we should be glad to see more often. (Written in 1955.)

#### Dominican Republic

M. Telesforo Caluero, Minister (June 7, 1955).  
\*M. Calderon is the first Dominican representative to be accredited to Israel. He is also Ambassador to Italy and will normally reside in Rome.

\*M. Calderon did not call on me during his brief visit to Israel. (Written in 1955.)

#### Finland

M. Toivo I. Kala, Chargé d'Affaires, *e.p.* (January 23, 1953).

\*M. Kala has served principally in the Far East and Turkey. He is a friendly and sociable man and his wife, in her solid way, is also pleasant. Both speak excellent English. (Written in 1955.)

#### France

M. Pierre Gilbert, Ambassador (March 4, 1953).  
\*M. Gilbert was born in Dunkirk in 1907 and, before entering the French Foreign Service in 1932 as a specialist in Oriental languages, served in the French Navy. He spent most of the pre-war period in China. He rejoined the French Navy soon after the outbreak of war, but left it after the internment of the French Fleet at Alexandria, when he joined the Royal Navy. He served with the French National Liberation Committee in Algiers and rejoined the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1944. In 1947 he became French Minister at Bangkok and subsequently French Ambassador at Lima. He is a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and holds the Croix de Guerre and the Résistance Medal. As a result of a shooting accident he has only one lung, a handicap which in no way interferes with his activities in work and sport. (Written in 1954.)

\*M. Gilbert has been Doyen since my predecessor's departure. Cultivated and intelligent, he is friendly enough to meet, but generally somewhat unforthcoming; and he shows little disposition to co-operate even in matters closely concerning the other Tripartite representatives. He is popular with the Israelis, largely because he speaks excellent Hebrew. His wife, a Greek from Alexandria, attracts attention by her clothes, but plays a negligible part in the social life of the Diplomatic Corps and makes no attempt to conceal her boredom. (Written in 1955.)

#### Greece

M. A. Vlachos, Diplomatic Representative (March 14, 1955).

\*A career diplomat, who has served in Rome and the Foreign Ministry in Athens; he is an author of some distinction. M. Vlachos is a friendly and intelligent colleague. His charming wife is the sister of a Greek diplomat. Both speak fluent French and good English. It is our loss that they reside in Jerusalem where, despite his anomalous position as the representative of a country which has not accorded *de jure* recognition to Israel, he is much liked and respected by Israeli officials. (Written in 1955.)

#### Guatemala

Dr. Jorge Garcia Granados, Minister (July 11, 1955).

Dr. Granados served as a member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine in 1947, in which capacity he worked hard for Jewish interests. He is commonly said to have ended this stage of his career a great deal richer than when he started it. The Government makes a great fuss over him, not

least because he established his Legation in Jerusalem despite pressure from all quarters, including, if they are to be believed, his own Government. His relations with his foreign colleagues are less cordial. He has an attractive wife, and his son is his First (and only) Secretary. In May 1956 he was appointed Guatemalan Minister to Greece also.

#### Hungary

M. Kalman Joo, Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.* (September 14, 1954).

M. Joo was born in Sobotitz in 1915. He and his wife are amiable and boring. Both speak some French and are learning English.

#### Iceland

M. Helgi P. Briem, Minister (October 26, 1951).

\*M. Briem resides in Stockholm and has not been in Israel since my arrival. (Written in 1955.)

#### Italy

Benedetto Capomazza, Marchese di Compollattaro, Ambassador (January 31, 1956).

\*M. Capomazza, who served as Minister here from December 1953, is in his early 50's and a Neapolitan. He claims to be a royalist and, in the Fascist era, served in the Foreign Press Office of the Ministry of Popular Culture. He has served in Washington and Madrid. He is dapper and amiable, and has considerable professional experience and all the social graces. He is married, but his (American) wife and child have not yet joined him in Israel and, if gossip is to be believed, are very unlikely to do so. (Written in 1955.) He improves steadily on acquaintance, and I find him a shrewd and helpful colleague.

#### Japan

M. Kuniyoshi Negishi, Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.* (August 30, 1955).

A former business man with little previous diplomatic experience. A pleasant but insignificant little man. His wife and family have not joined him here.

#### Netherlands

M. Gideon W. Boissevain, Minister (May 4, 1953).

\*M. Boissevain was born in Montreal, where his father was an honorary Netherlands Consul. He has served in consular and diplomatic capacities in many countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, France, China, Chile, Peru and Greece, whence he came to Israel. Aged about 45, he has a pleasant and distinguished appearance but his manners are not remarkable. His wife was born in Austria of a Russian *émigré* family; she is young and lively, and a trifle irresponsible. Both speak English and French.

\*M. Boissevain remains the only Western diplomatic representative, apart from the Greek, Uruguayan and Guatemalan, established in Jerusalem. (Written in 1955.)

#### Norway

M. Ernst Hougen, Minister (October 23, 1953).

Resides at Athens. Previously acted as Norwegian Chargé d'Affaires in Israel, but has only been here once since my arrival.

#### Poland

M. Zygfryd Wolniak, Minister (December 21, 1954).

\*Born in February 1922 at Graszyn. He has served in Ottawa and has also visited Brazil and the Argentine as a diplomatic courier. M. Wolniak is the first Polish Minister to Israel. He formerly held the post of Consul-General in Tel Aviv.

\*M. Wolniak and his wife are a good deal gayer and more agreeable than the rest of their Iron Curtain colleagues in Israel. M. Wolniak professes to be a Roman Catholic. He is regarded by the Israeli authorities as anti-semitic. (Written in 1955.)

M. Wolniak left Israel in April 1955 for Cambodia to serve as Polish representative on the International Armistice Supervisory Commission. He is still nominally Minister here, but it is thought that he will be replaced soon when Israel once more accredits a Minister to Warsaw.

#### Roumania

M. Gheorghe Chitic, Chargé d'Affaires (August 8, 1955).

M. Chitic is an amiable but unprepossessing young man; a trade union official and a Deputy. He previously served as Consul in London. He is now learning English.

#### Soviet Union

M. A. N. Abramov, Ambassador (August 10, 1954).

\*Early in 1945, M. Abramov was head of the Fourth European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which capacity he signed the Soviet-Polish trade and frontier treaties. From September 1945 to April 1946 he served as head of the Fifth European Department which deals with Finland and the Scandinavian countries, and a few months later was appointed Soviet Minister to Finland, where he remained until early 1948. In 1949 he was appointed as Ambassador to Sweden, but was prevented from taking up his post on account of illness.

\*No doubt under instructions, M. Abramov is friendly and cordial in his dealings with both other diplomatic missions and with the Israelis. I judge that his instructions accord well with his own temperament, which is expansive and genial. He travels widely and is, I imagine, active in promoting Communist interests; but he conducts himself with considerable discretion and is generally well liked. He knows little or no English, but is learning French. His wife, whose English is excellent, is easy-mannered and agreeable to meet and is widely said to be the brains of the family.

\*M. Abramov, who was appointed Minister to Israel in the autumn of 1953, returned as Ambassador in 1954, when the Israeli and Soviet Missions in Moscow and Tel Aviv respectively were raised to the status of Embassies on the resumption of diplomatic relations. (Written in 1955.)

#### Sweden

M. Jens Malling, Minister (March 16, 1956).

\*Apart from a period in 1955 as Swedish representative on the Korean Armistice Commission, M. Malling had previously been Chargé d'Affaires here since July 1953. He was born in 1909 and joined the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1938. He subsequently served in Rome, Chicago, Washington and New York, was appointed Swedish Vice-Consul at Hamburg in November 1945 and First Secretary and Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.*, in Vienna in September 1946. He returned to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1948. (Written in 1954.)

\*M. Malling is agreeable to meet and very well disposed but a trifle affected. He is said to be dominated by his mother, who normally lives with him, and his staff find him moody and difficult. (Written in 1955.)

Unfortunately this pleasant colleague will be leaving us shortly to become Swedish Minister at Djakarta.

#### Switzerland

M. Fritz Hegg, Minister (April 22, 1954).

\*M. Hegg, who is in his early 50's, was formerly in charge of the Administrative Division of the Political Department in Switzerland and apparently incurred the odium of his colleagues for the heavy-handed way in which he carried through a reorganisation scheme. Somewhat stiff and formal in his manner, I have, nevertheless, found him a pleasant and friendly colleague. His wife is also agreeable. Both speak good English. (Written in 1955.)

#### Turkey

M. Sefkati Istinyeli, Minister (December 22, 1952).

\*M. Istinyeli was born in Constantinople in 1897, the grandson of a former Vizier, and was educated at Constantinople and at Paris. He is a career diplomat with considerable experience, and was Minister in Bucharest and Sofia before coming to Tel Aviv. He is a bachelor and keen bridge-player and a notorious gossip. Much given to whispered confidences in elaborate French, he is usually well informed and I have always found him friendly and co-operative. He speaks no English. (Written in 1955.)

#### United States

Mr. Edward B. Lawson, Ambassador (November 11, 1954).

\*Mr. Lawson was born in Newport, Tennessee, in 1894 and educated at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. He arrived in Israel two days after me, having previously served as United States Minister to Iceland. His earlier appointments, mainly on the economic and commercial side, were in Johannesburg, London, Prague, Managua and Ankara.

\*Though considerably handicapped by deafness, he combines a good deal of shrewdness with common sense. I have found him a most helpful and co-operative colleague. He travels assiduously and reads innumerable speeches prepared for him by his Information Officer.

\*Mr. Lawson is accompanied by his wife, who is an amiable and friendly body but precluded by what is kindly, and in part truthfully, described as an incurable circulatory defect from playing any part in the activities of her husband's Mission. (Written in 1955.)

#### Uruguay

Dr. Pedro Maria di Lorenzo, Minister (May 28, 1956).

Dr. Lorenzo was Counsellor at the Uruguayan Embassy in Rome from 1951-55. Since he has established his Legation in Jerusalem I shall probably not be seeing much of him, but he seems a pleasant and sensible person.

#### Yugoslavia

M. Jovan Vukmanovic, Minister (May 25, 1954).

\*M. Vukmanovic, whose previous appointment was Consul-General in Marseilles, was formerly a teacher of classical Greek, which he studied at the University of Athens. He is an agreeable and friendly man, in his late 40's, and speaks good French and some English. His wife, who speaks French, is also pleasant. (Written in 1955.)



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## APPENDIX

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

No. 30

#### LEADING PERSONALITIES IN ISRAEL

Mr. Westlake to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 7)

(No. 99. Confidential) Tel Aviv,  
July 31, 1956.  
Sir,

I have the honour to submit a report on the leading personalities in Israel for the year 1956-57.

I have, &c.

PETER WESTLAKE.

#### Enclosure

#### Glossary

AGUDAT ISRAEL.—World organisation of strictly orthodox Jews; founded in 1912; opposed Zionism for many years as running contrary to Jewish Messianic beliefs; since the establishment of the State it has co-operated with the Jewish Agency and the Government.

GENERAL ZIONIST PARTY.—Conservative middle class party in Israel, protagonists of private enterprise.

HAGANAH.—Haganah was the underground Jewish armed defence force controlled by the Jewish Agency during the Mandate. Became the regular army of Israel on the establishment of the State.

HAMASHBIR HAMERKAZI.—Histadrut Wholesale Co-operative Society.

HAMIZRAHI.—Orthodox Religious and Zionist Party, affiliated in the Knesset to Hapoel Hamizrahi. Less extreme in its religious views than Agudat Israel.

HAPOEL HAMIZRAHI.—Labour Party and Trade Union. United, in the Knesset, with Hamizrahi. Except on religious issues its views do not diverge substantially from Mapai.

HASHOMER HATZAIR.—Extreme Left Socialist Zionist youth movement and political party. (See Mapam.)

HISTADRUT.—The General Federation of Jewish Labour in Israel.

HERUT.—Extreme Nationalist political party in Israel. (See I.Z.L.)

IHUD HA'KVUTZOT HA'KIBBUTZIM.—An organisation of pro-Mapai collective settlements.

IRGUN ZVAI LEUML.—Underground terrorist group founded in 1937 to fight the Mandatory régime. (Dissolved since the creation of the State and formed into a new party—Herut.)

JEWISH AGENCY.—Central Jewish body combining all Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists alike. Founded in 1929 and now concerned with education and Zionist activities abroad and with the absorption of immigrants into Israel.

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KIBBUTZ.—(plural, Kibbutzim: resident of, Kibbutznik). A collective agricultural settlement.

KIBBUTZ ARTZI (Country-wide Kibbutz).—Kibbutz Artzi is the organisation of kibbutzim belonging to the Hashomer Hatzair movement.

KNESSET.—Assembly—the Israel Parliament, which has only one Chamber. (M.K.=Member of the Knesset.)

LE'ACHDUT HA'AVODA (commonly abbreviated to ACHDUT AVODA).—An independent political party since 1954, when the members of two factions of Mapam, named Le'Achdut Avoda and Poalei Zion Smol, broke away to form the new grouping somewhat to the right of the reduced Mapam.

MAPAI.—Initials of "Mifleget Poalei Eretz Israel," the Labour Party; Israel's largest political party. (Moderate Socialist.)

MAPAM.—Initials of "Mifleget Poalim Me-uhedet," United Workers' Party, or the Left-wing Socialist Labour Party (Marxist). It now consists of a single faction, Hashomer Hatzair.

PALMACH.—The former crack striking force of the Haganah, formed of Mapam adherents.

POALEI ZION.—The Jewish Socialist Movement abroad, of Mapai complexion.

SOLEL BONEH.—Solel Boneh is the Histadrut's building-contracting institution, the largest in Israel.

VAAD LEUML.—The General Council of the executive body of the elected Assembly which represented the Jewish communities in Palestine during the Mandate (now dissolved).

WORLD MACCABI UNION.—A General Zionist-sponsored Union representing Maccabi Sports Clubs throughout the world. It organises the Maccabiah or International Jewish "Olympic" Games. "Maccabi" is Israel's oldest sports Organisation.

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#### 1. Agron, Gershon

Mayor of Jerusalem: Chairman of Board of Directors of the *Jerusalem Post*.

Born 1893 at Czernigov (Russia). Emigrated to the United States in 1916 and studied at Philadelphia University. Edited a Yiddish paper in 1917. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and on demobilisation settled in Palestine. In 1920-21 and 1924-27 head of the Zionist Organisation Press Bureau. In the interval he was editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York. Back in Palestine in 1924 he became correspondent for some English newspapers. In 1932 he founded *The Palestine Post* (now *Jerusalem Post*). He lost the financial control in 1948. In 1949 he became director of Israel Information Services, but resigned in February 1951, to return to the editorship of the *Jerusalem Post*. In 1951 his name was included in the list of Mapai candidates for the Knesset. In 1955 he headed the Mapai list in the Jerusalem municipal elections, and was subsequently elected Mayor.

Mr. Agron is Israel's leading English-language journalist, though of American rather than British outlook. He claims to be pro-British but is only really so on his own terms. In politics he tends towards the Left. Had diplomatic and political ambitions and is disappointed that they have not been realised, but has derived much satisfaction from his appointment to the Mayoralty of Jerusalem.

#### 2. Almogi, Joseph

Mapai M.K.

Born in Poland in 1902. Has for some years been Secretary of the Local Labour Council, Haifa, and consistently acts more independently than the secretaries of other Local Labour Councils. He is a tough and able trade union leader. He was the 84th (unsuccessful) candidate in the Mapai list in the Parliamentary Elections of January 1949, but secured election to the Third Knesset at the 36th place on the Mapai list in the elections of July 1955. He has since been re-elected as Secretary of the Haifa Labour Council. He is an ambitious man and, whilst he has ability, he relies at least as much on his forceful personality as on his brains.

#### 3. Alon, Yigal

Achdut Avoda M.K.

Born in 1909 and a member of Kibbutz Ginosar (a Mapam settlement), Yigal Alon was the founder and first commander of the Palmach, the crack Israel striking force, largely composed of Mapam kibbutzniks, which distinguished itself in the Palestine War but was subsequently disbanded owing to its Left-wing ideals. Yigal Alon held the rank of Aloof (Brigadier) in the Palestine War and commanded the Israel forces in the Negev campaign, as a result of which the Egyptian Army was driven out of the Negev. He has claimed publicly that he could easily have occupied Gaza and Hebron in 1948, but was ordered not to do so by the Government. In 1949 he was retired from the army in the purge of Mapam commanders and he subsequently went to England to study and was very favourably impressed. He spent a long time in London studying economics and social questions. He is a leading member and Secretary-General of Le'Achdut Avoda, which broke away from Mapam in August 1954.

Mr. Alon is regarded by Israelis as a born leader of men and is looked on by young people as a national hero. He is clearly a powerful rising force in the Israel political scene.

#### 4. Aranne, Zalman

Minister of Education and Culture.

Born at Yuzovka (Stalino) in South Russia in 1899. Attended the Agronomic Institute in Kharkov. Was a Zionist before the Russian Revolution and from 1920 was a member of the Central Committee of the underground Zionist Socialist Party. Came to Palestine in 1926. First a labourer, he later made a career in the secretariat of Jewish labour organisations, finally becoming a secretary of the Workers' Council of Tel Aviv. He was a delegate to the World Zionist Congresses of 1933 and 1935 and is a member of the Zionist Organisation's Action Committee.

In 1935-36 Mr. Aranne was in London studying trade union questions on behalf of the Histadrut. In the latter he has held the posts of Treasurer, Head of the Publicity Department and Director of the Workers' Training College. Originally associated with the Achdut Ha'avoda (Union of Labour) movement, Mr. Aranne followed it when in 1927-30 it amalgamated with other groups to form the Mapai Party, but he remained faithful to Mapai when the Left-wing of the movement again broke away in 1944. In 1948 he became Mapai's first Secretary-General and a M.K. in 1949. In the Knesset he became chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, a position he held until February 1951, when he resigned to organise Mapai's election campaign. After the elections he resigned his post of Secretary-General of Mapai. Shortly after entering Mr. Sharett's Cabinet in 1954 he was nominated Minister responsible for information matters. In

the coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion after the 1955 elections, he was appointed Minister of Education and Culture.

Mr. Aranne, who is a forceful speaker, has played a prominent and constructive part in Knesset debates. In 1950 he was one of Israel's delegates to the General Assembly of the United Nations. He is also one of his party's leading political tacticians.

#### 5. Argov, Meier

Mapai M.K. Born in the Ukraine in 1905. Came to Palestine 1925. Active in the Histadrut's trade union department, he became a member of the Histadrut executive, chairman of the Tel-Aviv labour exchange and chairman of the Union of Israel Labour Exchanges. In the Second World War he served with the Jewish Brigade. He sat as a representative of the Va'ad Leumi Executive on the Emergency Committee of 1947-48. Member of the Provisional Council of State in 1948, elected M.K. in 1949. He was also a member of the Zionist General Council. In February 1951 he succeeded Aranne (q.v.) as chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. From November 1951 until the spring of 1954 he was Secretary-General of Mapai. He asked to be relieved of this post on grounds of ill-health.

One of the truly activist people in Mapai, he remains Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of the Third Knesset to which he was re-elected in 1955. He is not, however, as significant, politically, as this position might imply.

#### 6. Araon, Abba S.

General Manager. Citrus Marketing and Control Boards.

Born Germany 1895. Doctor of Science (Econ.). Came to Palestine in 1926. Manager of a citrus co-operative from 1928-32 and Director of Jaffa Orange Syndicate 1932-39. Manager of Export Institute 1940-47.

A competent if not particularly forceful man conscious of the importance of the British connection with Israel and generally very helpful.

#### 7. Avidar, Aloof (Brigadier) Josef

Ambassador to Soviet Union.

Born in Russia in 1906. Took part in the organisation of Haganah and served with Wingate's night squads from 1936-37, losing an arm in operations. He was a senior staff officer from 1948 onwards and has commanded the Northern and Central Areas. He led an army delegation to Yugoslavia in 1952. In 1953 he attended a course in the United Kingdom (Senior Officers' School), where he was reported on as "a widely read and trained professional soldier of considerable ability," although this is perhaps a rather flattering description by Western standards. On his return to Israel, he was appointed head of the General Staff. In 1954 he accepted, somewhat reluctantly, the post of Ambassador to Moscow.

#### 8. Avner, Gershon

Diplomat.

Born in Berlin in 1919. Studied at Oxford and became president of the Union, subsequently serving in London with the Jewish Agency's Political Department. On coming to Israel he became head of the Western European Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In March 1952 he took part in the negotiations for reparations from Western Germany as political adviser to the Israel delegation. Subsequently he was appointed counsellor and



chargé d'affaires in Hungary and Bulgaria and is now counsellor at the Israel Embassy in London.

Mr. Avner is highly intelligent and an agreeable personality. His wife is a naturalised British subject.

#### 9. Avriel, Ehud

Mapai M.K. and joined the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee in Namir's place when the latter was appointed Minister of Labour.

Born in Vienna in 1918, Mr. Avriel came to Palestine just before the Second World War and joined a kibbutz. In 1943 he went to Istanbul on behalf of the Jewish Agency and took part in the rescue of Jews from Germany, co-operating also with Allied intelligence organisations. From 1945 to 1948 he was in Czechoslovakia and in 1948 he was appointed first Israel Minister to Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In June 1950 he was transferred to Bucharest. He accompanied the Prime Minister on his private journey to Athens and London in December 1950, and in April 1951 was appointed Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office. In November 1951 he was appointed to supervise the administration of United States grant-in-aid funds. In June 1952 he was appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Finance in succession to Horowitz (*q.v.*), continuing to be responsible for grant-in-aid matters. He resigned from this post in 1953 and retired to a Kibbutz settlement. In 1955 he was elected to the Knesset as a Mapai member. Agreeable and co-operative, Mr. Avriel had the reputation of being a competent official, but was not thought to be of the same calibre as Mr. Horowitz. He was, however, one of Mr. Ben-Gurion's chosen lieutenants. He was cited as an "American agent" in the Slansky-Clementis purge trial in Prague in 1952.

#### 10. Bader, Dr. Yochanan

Herut M.K.

Born in 1901 at Cracow. Studied law at Cracow University and was a leader of the Revisionists in Galicia. Came to Palestine in 1943, worked as a journalist and economist and was also active in the Irgun Zvai Leumi. Associated with the Revisionist paper *Hamashkif* and became editor of *Herut* on joining that party in 1948. Elected M.K., 1949, and was chairman of the Herut-Revisionist World Executive, 1949-51. Re-elected 1951 and 1955. He is a member of the Herut Executive Committee.

Dr. Bader is the leading Herut expert on economics. He is a poor speaker but a clear thinker who commands a more attentive hearing than most members of his party.

#### 11. Barkatt, Reuven

Director of the Political Department of the Histadrut.

Born in Russia in 1906. Educated at Strasbourg and the Sorbonne.

Mr. Barkatt is a leading member of the Histadrut Executive Bureau of nine, and is head of the International Department, the Arab Department and the Cultural Department of the Histadrut. He is also a member of the Central Committee of Mapai. He led the Histadrut delegation to the United Kingdom in 1950 and travels extensively to international Socialist conferences. He revisited England in 1952 and again as leader of the Israeli delegation to the Congress of the Socialist International in July 1955. He represents Mapai at the meetings of the Asian Socialist Congress and has visited Indonesia, India and Burma. He is now one of the three-man editorial board which controls the Asian Publishing House set up in Rangoon in 1955 following the

decision taken by the Asian Socialist Conference at its Tokyo meeting in November 1954. One of his staff has undertaken the management of the enterprise at Rangoon for the first two years. Speaks English, French, Hebrew, Russian and German. He is shy and reserved at first but talks interestingly when his reserve is broken down except that he is always devious and loves to talk in riddles. He has, however, a sense of humour, is friendly and is, in all, a strong personality.

#### 12. Barth, Dr. Aharon

Banker.

Born in 1890 in Berlin. Educated at Berlin and Heidelberg Universities and at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary. One of the leaders of the Mizrahi religious Zionist movement in Germany. Came to Palestine and entered the Anglo-Palestine Bank (now the Bank Leumi), of which he is general manager. He is also on the board of the Foundation Fund and of the Hebrew University. During the World War he was chairman of the Executive Committee for the Enlistment and Relief Fund and for the National War Loan. In 1950 he was appointed chairman of a new State Corporation for the development of the Negev. He is a member of the Economic Advisory Council and was President of the Congress Court at the 23rd Zionist Congress in 1951. In November 1952 he was asked by the religious parties to stand for the Presidency but after thinking it over he declined.

Dr. Barth is strictly orthodox. He is a strong dignified man, and is prepared to be helpful.

#### 13. Bartur, Moshe

Director of Economic Division of M.F.A.

Born at Moseiska in 1919. Came to Palestine from Germany and until 1948 lived in a kibbutz, of which he is still a member. He has travelled extensively on economic delegations and in 1952 accompanied Mr. Horowitz to London. Since 1953 he has been responsible for the negotiation of trade agreements between Israel and various European countries. He is helpful and of sound judgment.

#### 14. Bar-Yehuda, Israel

Minister of Interior.

Born 1895 in Poland. Trained as engineer. Came to Palestine in 1926 and joined kibbutz Yagur, near Haifa. Was one of the founders of Achdut Avoda. He became a member of the Va'ad Leumi and was a delegate to Zionist congresses. Elected to the Knesset on the Mapam list in 1949, he became Mapam whip and soon made his mark as a parliamentarian. Re-elected in 1951 and 1955 and appointed a Deputy Speaker in the Third Knesset. Became Minister of the Interior in the coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion in November 1955. He is a member of the Zionist General Council.

As a member of Mapam, he opposed the extreme pro-Soviet policy of the Hashomer Hatzair majority and stressed at meetings of the Mapam Council, of which he was a member, the Soviet Union's opposition to Zionism and its refusal to allow Russian Jews to emigrate to Israel and has strongly opposed undue subservience to the Communist bloc. He is now one of the leaders of the Le'Achdut Avoda Party.

#### 15. Barzilai, Israel

Minister of Health. Mapam M.K.

Born in Poland in 1913 and educated there, the son of a timber merchant. Joined Hashomer Hatzair and later studied at the Sorbonne. Settled in Palestine in 1934, joining a Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz at

Karkur, which subsequently merged with Kibbutz Negba. Was active in Hashomer Hatzair political work and in Histadrut activities and was a founder member of the Israel-Poland Friendship League. In April 1946, he visited Poland as an Israel unofficial representative and in August 1949, was appointed Minister at Warsaw, the only member of Mapam to be given a diplomatic post abroad. His staff were also members of Mapam. He held this post until the end of 1950, when he returned to Kibbutz Negba. In April 1953 he was elected political secretary of Mapam in place of Riftin (*q.v.*). He appears to be an Orthodox Mapam member who, while holding extreme Left views, is a convinced Zionist.

#### 16. Becker, Aharon

Mapai M.K. and trade union official.

Born in Poland in 1905. Came to Palestine in the twenties and has been for over twenty years a trade union official. He is now head of the trade union department of the Histadrut (General Confederation of Jewish Labour), a post which he has held since June 1949. A member of the Histadrut Executive. In 1950 he led a trade union delegation to Yugoslavia and from 1943-48 he was a director of Hamashbir Hamerkazi and head of its industrial department. In 1951 he visited the United Kingdom to study trade union and labour affairs and also to improve his English. He also visited the United States, France and Canada on trade union affairs. A trade union member of the Economic Advisory Council. In 1955 he was elected to the Knesset on the Mapai list.

Mr. Becker is an influential trade union leader and a possible successor to Mr. Namir as Secretary-General of the Histadrut. He is friendly and well-disposed and a powerful opponent of Mapam. Though an able man, his health is not good, and like many Israel leaders, he consistently overworks.

#### 17. Beigin, Menahem

Leader of Herut Party.

Born 1913 at Brest-Litovsk. Studied law at Warsaw University. At an early age joined the Revisionist Youth Movement, Betar. Appointed head of Betar in Czechoslovakia in 1936 and was head of its Polish section in 1939. After Soviet occupation of East Poland he was arrested and sent to Siberian concentration camps. Released under the Stalin-Sikorsky agreement, he joined the Polish Army with which he came to Palestine in 1942. He later left it and joined the anti-British underground movement, becoming leader of the terrorist "National Military Organisation" (Irgun Zvai Leumi). He emerged in public after May 1948, when he announced the transformation of the Irgun into a political party, the "Freedom Movement" (Herut), under his leadership. In September 1948, he succeeded in incorporating the majority of the Revisionist Party into it. Elected M.K. 1949 and re-elected in 1951 and 1955. Re-elected chairman of the party in April 1954. Herut's gains in the elections of 1955 owed much to his skilful and unscrupulous demagoguery.

Mr. Beigin is a lean sinister-looking intellectual with vulture-like features and rimless glasses. His undoubted oratorical talent and keen intelligence are warped by bitter extremism. Hatred of the British is still one of his main preoccupations and he glories in his murderous past. His memoirs were published in 1951, and an English edition, "The Revolt," was put on sale in London.

#### 18. Bejarano, Moshe

Industrialist.

Born at Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in 1902. Educated in Switzerland and Italy. With his brothers he established a leading cigarette business in Bulgaria and on coming to Palestine he co-operated with them in the

foundation of the "Assis" fruit-juice, citrus product and cigarette factory at Ramat Gan. From 1948-49 he was commercial counsellor to the Israel Legation in Moscow. He frequently represents Israel at commercial conferences abroad. In 1954 he went on a Government-sponsored mission to India and the Far East, to explore possibilities of increasing Israel's exports.

Mr. Bejarano is a Sephardic Jew and he and his brothers talk Ladino among themselves. He, himself, is highly intelligent and sophisticated and speaks a number of languages. He and his wife are much seen socially in Tel Aviv. His brother, Shimon Bejarano, is a General Zionist Member of the Knesset.

#### 19. Ben-Aharon, Yitzhak

Achdut Avoda M.K.

Born in Bukovina in 1906. Studied economics and law in Berlin. Came to Palestine in 1928 and joined kibbutz Givat Haim. Was a delegate to Zionist Congresses and became a member of the Zionist Actions Committee and of the Histadrut Council. During the Second World War he served in the British Army as a captain in the Royal Engineers; prisoner of war 1941-45. He became secretary-General of Mapam and was elected to the Knesset in 1949 and 1951. Member of the Central Committee of Mapam until, in 1954, he left the party with other members of the Achdut Avoda faction, of which he has for some time been a leading member. Elected Achdut Avoda M.K. in 1955. He is well disposed and speaks good English, but in public advocates a "neutralist" foreign policy identified neither with Russia nor with the West. A serious and likeable personality.

#### 20. Ben Gurion, Amos

Deputy Inspector-General of Police (1950).

Born in London in 1920, the son of David Ben-Gurion (*q.v.*). Educated at Herzlia Gymnasium, Tel Aviv, and the Kadoorie Agricultural School, Mount Tabor. Joined the British Army in 1940 and served with the Jewish Brigade in the Italian, Belgian and Dutch campaigns, being demobilised in 1946 with the rank of Major. Was Liaison Officer of Haganah with the British Army from 1947-48 and conducted the negotiations with the British authorities about the status of Jaffa in May 1948. During the Palestine War he commanded an infantry regiment and saw action near Tel Aviv and at Latrun. During the first cease-fire in June 1948 he acted as a liaison officer. Later in the year he joined the Israel Police Force, in which he has since served as Superintendent and later Deputy Inspector-General.

Mr. Ben Gurion is a serious yet slothful individual, and lacks his father's physical drive and mental agility. He has not entirely cleared his name from allegations that he has profited financially from his appointment. He has an English Gentile wife, who comes from the Isle of Man.

#### 21. Ben-Gurion, David

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

Born at Plonsk in Poland in 1886 of an orthodox Jewish family, he received a traditional religious education, which he managed to supplement. Early in life he became interested in the Jewish Socialist movement (Poale Zion). His activities as a revolutionary orator during the pogroms of 1905 led to his being blacklisted by the Russian Government, and in 1906 he emigrated to Palestine. He worked as an agricultural labourer at Petah Tikva and later at the wine cellars at Rishon-le-Zion. He continued his Socialist activity and persuaded the local Socialists to turn from Yiddish to Hebrew. In 1913 he spent a year studying law at Constantinople. In 1915 he



was expelled from Palestine to Egypt, still being a Russian subject, and made his way to the United States. Here he helped to prepare pioneer settlers for Palestine and American Jewish units for the British army. He became a private in the Royal Fusiliers and returned to Palestine with General Allenby's army.

After the war he took part in the formation of the Achdut Avoda (United Labour) Party (1919) and in the same year was elected to the Zionist Executive. He played a leading part in the creation of the Histadrut and remained its general secretary until 1933. In 1930, when Achdut Avoda and Hapoel Hatzair merged to form Mapai, he emerged as the unquestioned leader of the party. From then on he became an increasingly important figure in the Zionist movement. In 1935 he joined the Executive of the World Zionist Organisation and became chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem and the effective leader of Palestine Jewry. He was bitterly opposed to the White Paper of 1939, and events favoured his line rather than the restraint advocated by Dr. Weizmann, then the outstanding figure in the Zionist movement. The Second World War delayed the crisis. Mr. Ben-Gurion threw himself wholeheartedly into the war effort and the recruitment of Jews, though later his motives were probably more political than otherwise. In 1942, while Weizmann hesitated, he sponsored the Biltmore programme, which called for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth and army and unrestricted immigration. In 1946 he was interned for eight months for connivance at terrorism. In 1947, after the United Nations partition resolution, he was elected chairman of the National Council and put in charge of security and defence. When the Mandate ended he was already the appointed leader of a shadow Government. He took over the Defence portfolio and his personal energy and initiative were an important factor in Israel's victory over the Arabs. The war was under his personal direction, and he emerged from it a national hero. After it he quickly and ruthlessly suppressed the private army of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and purged the army of Mapam leaders, destroying the separate identity of the Palmach and making the army his own loyal instrument.

In the 1949 elections Mapai emerged the strongest party and Ben-Gurion formed a coalition Government. He subsequently made periodical efforts to broaden his Government but without success. Disagreements with the religious parties became ever more acute and finally brought about the defeat of the Government in 1951. After the 1951 elections he formed a new coalition not very different from the old, in which he continued as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. He spent May 1951 touring the United States, primarily to raise funds. In December 1952 he formed a new coalition Government with the General Zionists, again becoming Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

In December 1953 he announced his intention of resigning from the offices of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and withdrew, with his wife, to the remote and isolated settlement of Sde Boker, in the Negev, some 30 kilom. south of Beersheba. His professed motive for retiring from public life was to be relieved from the physical and mental strains imposed upon him as Prime Minister, in order to devote a period of time to thought and study, to write, and to rekindle the pioneering spirit in Israel. In 1955 he returned to the Government as Minister of Defence in succession to Mr. Lavon whose resignation, following differences of opinion with Mr. Sharett over defence policy, threatened to split Mapai. He led the party in the elections to the Third Knesset and after prolonged inter-party discussions succeeded in forming a coalition in November 1955.

Mr. Ben-Gurion is a man of great energy and self-confidence who does not easily brook opposition. He is brusque and impulsive and enjoys defying conventions; emotional and with a streak of Messianic fervour; a forthright and determined leader with a direct and fundamentally honest approach. He is a voracious reader, with a predilection for Plato, and speaks several languages, including English. His wife, formerly a nurse, comes from New York.

## 22. Bentov, Mordechai

Minister of Development.

Born in 1900 at Grodzisk near Warsaw. Attended the Politechnion and University of Warsaw and Law Classes, Jerusalem. Came to Palestine in 1920. A founder of the Hashomer Hatzair movement. Delegate to various Zionist congresses and member of the Zionist Executive (1935). Member of the Agricultural Committee (1938). Delegate to the Round Table Conference, London (1939). Member of the Histadrut Executive Committee (1942). Member of the Provisional Council of State and Minister of Labour and Reconstruction in the Provisional Government (1948). Was elected to the Knesset in 1949 and 1951. Became, in 1951, chairman of the Knesset Economic Committee. In December 1952 he led the Israel delegation to the Vienna "peace conference." He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1955 and became Minister of Development in the coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion in November of that year.

Mr. Bentov is essentially a man of Hashomer Hatzair. He is a member and resident of Mishmar Ha'emek, one of its leading communal settlements, where his wife runs the school, which has considerable local renown. For years he has been a member of the editorial board of *Al Hamishmar*, organ of the movement. He is a man of considerable erudition and speaks six languages including English, and has made a study of Arab-Jewish relations. Fellow journalists say that he will always be found on the side of the majority in Mapam, and indeed he appears now to be a time-server.

## 23. Ben-Zvi, Yitzhak, M.B.E.

President of Israel (1952).

Born 1884 at Poltava. Studied at Kiev University and was an active promoter of Socialist Zionism in Russia, Germany and Switzerland. Settled in Palestine in 1907. Studied law at Istanbul University (1913-14), was expelled from Palestine (1915), went to the United States, worked on preparing pioneers for Palestine, helped to recruit the Jewish Legion and served in it (1918-20). One of the founders of the Va'ad Leumi (General Council of the Jewish Community); from 1920 onwards member of its Præsidium and its president from 1931 to 1948. Twice appointed to the High Commissioner's Council, but resigned; in both cases on the immigration issue. In 1937 he represented the Jewish community in Palestine at the coronation of King George VI. Has been delegate at Zionist Congresses and a member of the Zionist General Council. A founder of the Histadrut and of Mapai. Member of the Provisional Council of State (1948) and of the Knesset (1949). Re-elected 1951.

In November 1952 he was nominated by Mapai as their candidate for the Presidency and a month later he was elected to that office on the third ballot.

Mr. Ben-Zvi is a simple and modest man who is universally liked and respected, and he has shown dignity, moderation and sense in his new office, which is largely symbolic. He is quite unaffected, and lived for years in a small wooden hut in

Jerusalem. Before being elected President he took little part in active politics, but was looked upon as the "grand old man" of Mapai. He is a leading orientalist and the author of several books and many articles, and an authority on the Samaritan community. One of his two sons was killed in the Palestine War.

## 24. Bernstein, Dr. Perets

General Zionist M.K.

Born in 1890 at Meiningen (Germany). Studied at Meiningen University and Eisenach. Was in business in Germany and Holland, 1907-35. On the Executive of the Zionist Organisation of Holland from 1924 and its president in 1930-34. Came to Palestine in 1936, and founded the General Zionist paper *Haboker*. In 1937 he entered the Executive of the General Zionist Party. President of the party since 1943; unanimously re-elected in November 1949. He entered the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency in 1946 and in 1947 became head of its trade and industry department. In 1948 he became member of the Provisional Council of State and entered the Provisional Government as Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply, with responsibility for war-time controls. Elected M.K., 1949, he declined to serve in the Government. Re-elected 1951. In November 1952, he was the General Zionist candidate for the presidency. A month later, when the General Zionists joined Mr. Ben-Gurion's Coalition Government, he became Minister of Trade and Industry. He held the same post in the coalition formed by Mr. Sharett in January, 1954 but relinquished it in 1955 when the General Zionist Party withdrew from the coalition.

At the end of 1955 he was converted to activism. He is probably now a spent force, however.

## 25. Biran, Dr. Avraham

Consul-General at Los Angeles.

Born in 1909 at Petach Tikvah. Educated at Reali Intermediary School, Haifa, and Teacher's Seminary, Jerusalem. Graduated at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore (M.A., Ph.D.).

From 1928 onwards worked as teacher in Haifa and Baltimore. Later held a fellowship at the American School of Oriental Research, Jerusalem, specialising in archaeology. Has participated in archaeological expeditions in Palestine, Syria, Transjordan and Iraq. In 1937 he entered the Palestine Government service as Cadet District Officer, Nazareth, and served as District Officer in various towns in northern Palestine. In 1946 he became District Officer in Jerusalem and at the end of the Mandate he entered the service of Israel as assistant Military Governor of the City. When military government ceased he became District Commissioner (or "Government Representative") for Jerusalem. In 1955 he accepted the appointment of Consul-General at Los Angeles.

## 26. Burg, Dr. Shlomo Joseph

Minister of Posts.

Born in Germany in 1909 and educated at the universities of Berlin and Leipzig (Ph.D.). He also undertook Jewish religious studies in Berlin and received a rabbinical diploma. Becoming a member of the religious pioneering movement, he joined the Palestine Office in Berlin and was active in Germany on behalf of Youth Aliyah. He came to Palestine in 1939 and entered the teaching profession in Tel Aviv. He is a leading member of Hapoel Hamizrahi-Hamizrahi. Elected to the Knesset in 1949 on the religious *bloc* list, he became Deputy Speaker. He favoured the inclusion of his party within the Histadrut and emerged as one of the leaders of the "Lamifne" faction. Re-elected in 1951, he was appointed Minister of Health

in Mr. Ben-Gurion's reconstituted coalition Government. When the General Zionists were included in the coalition in December 1952 he was given the Ministry of Posts, which he retained in Mr. Sharett's coalition formed in January 1954 and in Mr. Ben-Gurion's coalition of November 1955.

## 27. Carmel, Moshe

Minister of Transport.

Born in Poland in 1911. Educated at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the University of Paris. Settled in Palestine in 1924. He became an officer in the Haganah in 1941 and commanded units in the Haifa district during the closing years of the Mandate. He was detained by the Mandatory Government for a period in Acre prison. He served in the Israel Defence Forces and became Military Commander of the Northern District. He is a member of the Agriculture Council of the Histadrut, but is not a member of the Knesset.

## 28. Chazan, Yaakov Arie

Mapam M.K.

Born in 1899 in Brest-Litovsk and educated in Poland. One of the founders of the Hashomer Hatzair movement in Poland and of its world organisation. Came to Palestine in 1923 and helped to found the kibbutz at Mishmar Ha'emek, where he still resides. Is on the Secretariat of the Hashomer Hatzair Federation (kibbutz Artzi). Member of the Zionist General Council and delegate to Zionist Congresses since 1928. Member of the Histadrut Executive Committee. Member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund. M.K., 1949. Re-elected 1951 and 1955.

Mr. Chazan is one of the most active Mapam leaders and a pro-Soviet extremist though he remains a Zionist. He is given to immoderate statements and in a speech early in 1949 described Soviet Russia as his "second homeland."

## 29. Cohen, Haim

Attorney-General (1950).

Born in 1911 at Lübeck (Germany). Studied at Universities of Munich, Hamburg and Frankfurt. Came to Palestine in 1933 and studied at the Hebrew University and Rabbinical College, Jerusalem. In private legal practice 1937-48. In 1948 he became secretary of the Jewish Agency's Legal Council and was engaged in legal work in preparation for independence. In June 1948, he entered the civil service as State Attorney and Director of the Department of Prosecution in the Ministry of Justice; he later became Director-General of the Ministry as well. Appointed Attorney-General, February 1950, and Minister of Justice June 1952, continuing to hold the office of Attorney-General as well. In December 1952 he had to give up the Ministry of Justice and his seat in the Cabinet to make way for the Progressive and General Zionist members, but he remains Attorney-General.

Mr. Cohen is a non-party man and is not a member of the Knesset.

## 30. Comay, Michael Saul

Israel Ambassador to Canada (1954).

Born in 1908 at Capetown. Educated in South Africa (B.A., LL.B.) and practised at the South African bar till 1940. Served with South African Forces, 1940-46, in the Western Desert and in Britain, in Military Intelligence (Captain) and Army Education (Major); twice mentioned in despatches. After the war he came to Palestine as special representative of the South African Zionist Federation and entered the service of the Jewish Agency Political Department. Was attached to the Jewish delegation to the United Nations, 1947-48. He became Director of the British Commonwealth Division



when the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was first established and in May 1952 Assistant Director-General in the Ministry, being responsible for the British Commonwealth, American and Western European Divisions. He was appointed the first Israel Minister to Canada in 1953 and became Ambassador there in August, 1954.

Mr. Comay is intelligent and able. He talks well and is outwardly friendly, but is a difficult and moody man who never relaxes. He is suspicious and critical of the United Kingdom, and is hypersensitive to criticism of Israel's policies. Formerly almost hostile, the prejudices of his wife (a vain woman) and himself have somewhat abated.

### 31. Dan, Hillel

Managing director, Solel Boneh.

Born in 1900 at Vilna. Veteran Commander of the Haganah. Has held a series of increasingly important administrative posts in the Histadrut and is now a member of its Executive. He helped to relaunch Solel Boneh after its 1922 bankruptcy and make it a success, and since 1935 he has been responsible for policy in all Histadrut industrial enterprises. He is a director of the Israel Mining Company, a Government concern formed to exploit minerals in the Negev, and a member of the Economic Advisory Council, as well as a director of the German Reparations Purchasing Company.

Mr. Dan is a dictatorial character, who inspires respect but also fear in his subordinates. Said to be ruthless but a man of his word. Hates paper work but has a remarkable memory for salient facts and figures. Speaks no English. He is at present seriously ill with angina pectoris and is hence losing his grip on Solel Boneh's affairs.

### 32. Dayan, Rav-Aloof (General) Moshe

Chief of Staff.

Born 1916 Degania (Galilee). Brought up at the co-operative settlement of Nahalal. His father, Shmuel Dayan, is a Mapai M.K., and his brother was killed in the Palestine War. Early associated with the Haganah and was a volunteer in Wingate's "night squads." Sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in 1939 for illegally engaging in secret military training, he was released in 1941 to join a scout unit formed to assist the British Army in Syria against the Vichy French. He lost his left eye in the fighting and now wears an eyeshield. In 1948-49 he commanded a Palmach Brigade and later was Military Commander of the Jerusalem area. He then headed the military section of the Israel mission at the armistice negotiations in Rhodes. On his return, was appointed chief Israel delegate to the four Mixed Armistice Commissions. Relinquished this appointment in November, 1949, becoming Regional Commander of the Southern Area with promotion to rank of Aloof. In October 1951 he relinquished this command and went to the United Kingdom for a course at the Senior Officers' School, Devizes. In May 1952 he was given command of the Northern Area and in December 1952 he went to G.H.Q. as Head of the General Staff Branch.

In December 1953 Dayan succeeded General Makleff as Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces. He is no lover of administrative work and far prefers the field to his office. He inclines to the view that the Arab States best understand the language of force, and has been closely identified with the activist school of thought, of which he is a skilful exponent.

Dayan is pleasant and friendly, with a reputation as a talented negotiator. There are some signs that he is becoming more moderate with responsibility. He now openly admits to his special

association with a young Mapai group. His wife received part of her education in England and is active in the encouragement of handicrafts among immigrants from North Africa.

### 33. Di-Nur, Professor Ben-Zion

Former Minister of Education and Culture.

Born in the Ukraine in 1884. Educated at the universities of Berne and Berlin, the Institute of Jewish Studies in Berlin and the Yeshivot of Tels, Kovno and Wilna. Came to Palestine in 1921, and was on the staff of the Hebrew Teachers' Seminary at Beit Hakerem until 1948. Lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem from 1936-47 and in 1947 Professor of Modern Jewish History there, at the same time becoming Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and member of the university's executive council. A Mapai delegate to Zionist congresses and a member of the Jewish Community Council of Jerusalem, he was elected to the first Knesset in 1949 on the Mapai list. He was not re-elected in 1951, but on the formation of the new Cabinet in October 1951 became Minister of Education and Culture continuing as such in the Coalition Government formed in December 1952 and in the coalition formed by Mr. Sharett in January 1954. He did not stand for election to the Third Knesset in 1955. In the coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion in November 1955 his Ministerial responsibilities were transferred to Mr. Aranne.

### 34. Divon, Shmuel

Foreign Ministry official.

Born in Russia in 1917. Settled in Palestine in 1935. Educated at Hebrew University. Served as staff officer in Haganah in charge of Arab affairs. Served in Israel Legation at Paris. In 1956 appointed Assistant to the Foreign Minister on Arab affairs.

### 35. Dobkin, Eliahu

Member of the Jewish Agency Executive (1933).

Born Bobruisk, Russia, in 1898. Educated at high school and Kharkov University. An active Zionist, he administered the emigration office in Warsaw from 1914-30. He came to Palestine in 1932 and was subsequently elected deputy member of the Jewish Agency Executive (1935) and director of the Agency's Immigration Department (1932). From 1932 on he was continuously concerned with the organisation of immigration. He was a delegate to all the Zionist congresses from 1921 on and in 1933 became a full member of the Zionist Executive. He was a Mapai member of the Provisional Council of State from 1948-49 and later became chairman of the Organisation Committee of the Zionist Executive and was in charge of the arrangements for the 23rd Zionist Congress in Jerusalem. In 1951 he was re-elected a Mapai member of the Zionist Executive and became head of the Youth and Immigration Department of the Agency and also of its Administrative Department. He is also a member of the Foundation Fund Executive.

Mr. Dobkin is a leading member of Mapai but has hitherto devoted himself to Jewish Agency affairs and eschewed domestic politics.

### 36. Dori, Rav-Aloof Yaakov

Former Chief of Staff. President of Haifa Institute of Technology (1951).

Born 1899 at Odessa. In Palestine since 1906. Studied at Reali School, Haifa. Served in the Jewish Legion 1918-21, becoming sergeant-major. Studied at University of Ghent, Belgium, 1922-26, graduating as civil engineer. 1926-29, served in technical depart-

ment of Palestine Zionist Executive. Associated from the start with the Haganah, from 1929 onwards he was entirely engaged in its service, becoming head of its training department, and, from 1939, its Chief of Staff. In 1945-47 spent eighteen months in the United States. Emerged into the open as Haganah leader in May, 1948, and directed military operations throughout the Arab war. In November, 1949, he relinquished the post of Chief of Staff and went abroad on sick leave. On his return he was seconded to the Prime Minister's office (May, 1950) to act as Head of its Science Division, representing the Prime Minister in relations with various scientific bodies. In February 1951 he became president of the Haifa Institute of Technology (Technion), continuing part-time as head of the Scientific Division. He also became chairman of the board of directors of the Israel Mining Company, a Government development organisation. In 1951 he was also appointed a Government director of the new Dead Sea potash company.

Rav-Aloof Dori is a friendly man of broad culture and a good linguist who has spent much time in studying military literature and arranging for the production of military text books in Hebrew. A small bespectacled man, he looks more like a professor than a military commander, but he had experience of fighting in the Arab disturbances of 1921, 1929 and 1936-39. He has the reputation of being politically impartial, very hard working and personally modest. The reason given for his retirement from the army was weak health, and he undoubtedly suffers from an ulcerated stomach. But there were other reasons, among them his attachment to Haganah tradition and unadaptability to the needs of a modern army and his reluctance to weed out officers associated with Mapam. Since 1955 he has headed the body responsible for organising the Defence Fund.

### 37. Eban, Aba

Head of Israel Delegation to United Nations (1948) and Ambassador at Washington (1950).

Born in 1915 at Capetown of a Lithuanian Jewish family. Brought up in England and educated at Cambridge (1934-39), where he obtained a triple first in Arabic, Hebrew and Persian. Associated with the Zionist Movement from boyhood. Representative at the World Zionist Congress, Geneva, 1939. Commissioned in the British Forces, 1939, and sent to the Middle East as Chief Arab Censor at G.H.Q., Cairo, 1940. In 1942 he was appointed liaison officer with the Jewish Agency for special operations in the event of German occupation of Palestine. 1943, appointed Chief Instructor, Middle East Arab Centre, Jerusalem. 1946, head of the Jewish Agency's Information Department, London. Participated in the World Zionist Congress, Basle, 1946. Jewish Agency liaison officer with the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine, 1947. Went with the latter to New York, where he remained, assuming leadership of the Israel Delegation to the United Nations in July 1948. In May 1950 he was appointed to succeed Mr. Elath as ambassador in Washington, at the same time remaining Permanent Representative at the United Nations.

Mr. Eban, whose Hebrew name of Even has not become established, even in Israel, is highly intelligent. He is a very sharp controversialist in his official capacity and has been an eloquent though hardly conciliatory Israel spokesman at the United Nations. He is in the inner counsels of the Government on all foreign matters of importance. Like many leading Israelis he has too much on his shoulders.

### 38. Elath, Eliahu

Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Born in 1903 at Snovsk (Ukraine), son of a timber merchant. Graduated at a non-Jewish school and began studying medicine at Kiev but was imprisoned in 1922 for participation in a secret congress of the Zionist Youth Movement. In 1923, after a short period of underground Zionist activity in Moscow, he made his way to Danzig to participate in a world conference of Hechaluts (pioneers). Remained in the Baltic for a year, organising illegal emigration from Russia via Latvia to Palestine, where he settled himself in 1925. Worked as agricultural labourer (secretary of the Rehovoth Labour Council) and construction labourer in Transjordan. Fought as a Haganah commander during the Arab disturbances of 1929. Studied Arabic at the Hebrew University and the American University, Beirut (1928-34). In 1930 he was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship for the study of the Syrian bedouin. From 1931-34 was Reuter's representative in Beirut. On completion of his studies joined the political department of the Jewish Agency and from 1934-45 was head of its Middle and Near East Division. Travelled extensively in the area, including Persia and Turkey. From 1945 onwards the Agency employed him on various political missions in the United States, including the San Francisco conference. On the declaration of independence he became Israel diplomatic representative in Washington, his status being raised in February 1949 to that of Ambassador. Transferred to London as Minister in June 1950 and became Ambassador there in 1952.

Mr. Elath is a sociologist and orientalist and has written books on the Beduin (among whom he has lived) and on Lebanon and Transjordan. He is an extremely intelligent and likeable person who inspires confidence and gives an impression of honesty and straightforwardness as well as ability. His wife has similar qualities.

### 39. Eliashar, Eliahu

Former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and former Sephardic M.K.

Born in 1899 at Jerusalem of an old established family of local landowners. Served in the Turkish Army 1915-18. Attended the French University in Beirut and the Jerusalem Law Classes and in 1922 entered the Palestine Government service. Was in charge of the Trade Section and Official Receiver of Companies and Bankruptcies; edited the Official Census of Industries Report (1927-29) and the Government Commercial Bulletin. Left the service in 1934 and has since engaged in business. Is a director of several important commercial and financial companies and has been Managing Director of the Jerusalem Development Company and of Buildco, Ltd.

Mr. Eliashar was formerly on the Board of the Jerusalem Jewish Council, and became president of the Sephardic Community in Jerusalem. Elected to the Knesset in 1949, he became more openly critical of the Government. Finally, in May 1951, he had to resign leadership of the United Sephardim movement, of which he represented the wealthy Right-wing element. He was the first politician openly to propose in the Knesset (May 1950) that Israel should abandon neutrality and adopt a Western orientation. Was Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem from January 1951 until the summer of 1955. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1951 on the Sephardic and Oriental Communities list supporting the General Zionists. In November 1951 he was elected a vice-president of the World Federation of Sephardic Communities. He failed to secure election to the Third Knesset in 1955.



**40. Erem, Moshe**

Achdut Avoda M.K.

Born in Russia in 1896. Educated at the universities of Leningrad and Moscow. Was from 1915-22 Commissar for Labour in the Soviet administration in Poland. He became one of the founders of the Poalei Zion Party and came to Palestine in 1924. He was a delegate to Zionist congresses and was a senior official in the Ministry of Minorities until its dissolution. He was also for a number of years a member of the Histadrut Executive. In politics he joined the Left Poalei Zion faction which merged with Hashomer Hatzair and Achdut Avoda to form Mapam, and was elected a Mapam member of the Knesset in 1949 and re-elected in 1951. He took a prominent part in Peace Movement activities and on the occasion of Admiral Edelman's visit to Israel in 1951 he vigorously attacked the part the Royal Navy had played in preventing illegal immigration. He has consistently taken a stand with the extreme pro-Soviet members of his party. In 1951 he came into conflict with the Communist Party and was denounced by the Communist newspaper *Kol Ha'am* as a "veteran professional anti-Communist agitator" and as a "modern Titoist." In 1954 he left Mapam and became a member of the independent Achdut Avoda Party. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1955.

**41. Eshkol, Levi**

Minister of Finance.

Born in 1895 at Ortowo (Ukraine). Received a high school and religious education at Vilna and came to Palestine in 1914. In 1918 he served in the Jewish Legion. He then participated in the foundation (1920) of two communal settlements (Degania "B" and Kiryat Anavim) and the small-holders' settlement of Ataroth (1922). Always associated with agricultural enterprise and author of numerous articles on colonisation, in 1935 he became a director of "Nir," the Histadrut agricultural credit institution, and a member of the Histadrut's Central Agricultural Council. Founder and manager of the "Mekorot" water company (1937). Became a director of the Workers' Bank and of the public works and housing corporations "Bizur" and "Amidar."

In 1948 Mr. Eshkol served for a time as one of the three "Assistants to the Minister of Defence" in the Provisional Government. A member of the Zionist General Council and Jewish Agency Executive, he became Director of the Agency's Agricultural Settlement Department. In October 1949 he was appointed acting treasurer of the Agency and was confirmed in that post by the Executive Plenary in January 1950.

In 1951 he was elected to the Knesset on the Mapai list. He continued as treasurer and head of the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, but in October 1951 he became Minister of Agriculture and Development as well. In June 1952 he succeeded Kaplan as Minister of Finance. He subsequently gave up his post as Jewish Agency Treasurer, but remained in charge of the Agency's Settlement Department and continued as a member of the Agency's Executive. He remained Minister of Finance in the coalition formed by Mr. Sharett in January 1954 and in the coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion after the elections to the Third Knesset.

Mr. Eshkol is a leading member of the Government and on several occasions acted as Prime Minister in the latter's absence. Able and sincere, he is an agreeable person to meet; but he has a tough and uncompromising side of his character and an inclination towards activism. Mr. Eshkol's

approach to his job is essentially pragmatic and he has the reputation of being more realistic in his economic approach than some of his Mapai and Histadrut associates.

**42. Eytan, Walter George**

Director-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Born in 1910 at Munich. Went to England as a boy. Naturalised British subject, 1926. Educated at St. Paul's School, London, and Queen's College, Oxford. Was lecturer on German philology at the latter, 1936-46. Joined the Royal Armoured Corps 1939. Transferred in 1940 to Naval Intelligence in which he served till the end of hostilities. 1946, settled in Palestine and till 1948 directed the Jewish Agency's Public Services College. May, 1948, appointed Director-General (Permanent Under-Secretary) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Headed the Israel delegation to the armistice negotiations at Rhodes, 1948-49. Paid an official visit to India, 1952. He retains his interest in improving the quality of Israel's Civil Service and is chairman of the Public Commission for Civil Service Examinations.

Mr. Eytan is a highly intelligent and cultured person with moderate views though beneath his donnish exterior he is a fanatical Zionist. He has the reputation of being a good organiser. In the early summer of 1956 he made a long tour of Communist capitals, including Moscow. It is difficult to judge the extent of his influence in the formation of Israel's foreign policy.

**43. Foerder, Dr. Yeshayalm**

Progressive M.K.

Born in Germany 1901. Educated at the universities of Königsberg, Heidelberg and Freiberg. Was in practice as a lawyer in Berlin and secretary of the Zionist organisation in Germany. Came to Palestine in 1933 and was active in organising the settlement of middle-class immigrants. Was a delegate to Zionist congresses and was one of the founders of "Rassco," a company providing housing for immigrants. He was Food Controller from 1948-49. In 1949 he was elected to the Knesset on the Progressive list and was re-elected in 1951 and 1955. He is a member of the advisory council to the Investments Centre and in November 1952 became chairman of the Public Advisory Council for reparations from Germany.

Dr. Foerder is pro-British, friendly and extremely intelligent and is the brains of the Progressive Party.

**44. Galili, Israel**

Achdut Avoda M.K.

Born in 1904 at Pinsk in the Ukraine and received a secondary education in Palestine. Active in the Haganah from early youth, he was second-in-command of its underground forces and acted as its Commander-in-Chief during the first months of the Arab war in 1948. For a time he served as one of three "Assistants to the Minister of Defence" in the Provisional Government, but quarrelled with Mr. Ben-Gurion over the spirit and organisation of the Army and the rôle of Palmach in it, and was dropped. He was a Mapam member of the Knesset from 1949-51. Though bitter about the Army Mr. Galili showed himself conciliatory on other questions debated by Mapam and Mapai. In the winter of 1949-50 he was active in the negotiations between the two parties and led the Mapam minority group which wished to continue them. Though opposing the Israel Government's stand over Korea and the secession of the Histadrut from the World Federation of Trade

Unions, he emerged as a leader of the less extreme wing of Mapam, who opposed the out-and-out pro-Cominform stand of Hashomer Hatzair. In June 1951 he was still a member of the Mapam Central Committee of five, but, probably as the result of disagreements with the extremists, he was placed last on the Mapam list for the 1951 elections, with no hope of re-election. In April 1952 the struggle between him and the extreme pro-Soviet group came to a head, and he was forced to resign from the Mapam Central Committee and from all other party committees. In 1954 he left the party with other members of the Achdut Avoda faction and became a M.K. in 1955.

Mr. Galili is a resident member of the mixed kibbutz at Na'an, which he helped to found (1930), and Chairman of the Regional Council in which it is comprised. He is a forceful speaker but lacks education. He visited the United Kingdom in 1954 under the auspices of the British Council.

**45. Goldman, Nahum**

President. World Zionist Organisation and Chairman of the Jewish Agency.

A United States citizen, born in 1894 in America. Studied at Marburg, Berlin and Heidelberg. He has been a member of the Jewish Agency Executive since 1935 and Chairman of the crucial American Section since 1949. He represented the Jewish Agency at the League of Nations between 1935-39 and in negotiations with His Majesty's Government and the United States Government between 1945-48 and the United Nations between 1947-48. Since the founding of the State, Dr. Goldman has played a leading part in many important negotiations, particularly the Jewish-Israel Reparations Agreement with the West German Government in 1952. He exercises considerable influence within a large number of unofficial and semi-official Zionist organisations. He is also a publisher and author. Previously Co-Chairman of the World Zionist Organisation with Mr. Berl Locker (No. 75), in May this year he was overwhelmingly elected the first president of the organisation since Dr. Weizmann's resignation at the 22nd Congress.

Dr. Goldman represents a strong body of moderate and realistic Zionist opinion which believes that World Jewry must not be pressed to do much more than give moral and financial support to Israel. He intends to reorganise the Zionist Movement (which is much needed) but is probably not politically strong enough to succeed.

**46. Goldstein, Dr. Sydney**

Scientist.

Born in 1903 at Hull, Yorkshire. Studied at Leeds and Cambridge (M.A., Ph.D. (1928)). Spent a year as a Rockefeller Research Fellow at the University of Goettingen and then worked at Manchester and Cambridge Universities. At Manchester, where he lectured in applied mathematics, he built up a school of fluid mechanics which has been described as "unsurpassed in Europe." At Cambridge he became a Fellow of St. John's. During the Second World War he worked on aeronautics at the National Physical Laboratory. He became chairman of the British Council for Aeronautical Research and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

In 1950 Dr. Goldstein came to Israel and began building up from nothing a Department of Aeronautical Engineering at the Haifa Institute of Technology with American funds. In 1951 he became vice-president of the institute. In June 1954 he left for Harvard University to spend a year as visiting professor.

Dr. Goldstein is one of the few Anglo-Saxon Jews who have thrown up distinguished careers to help build up the Jewish State. He is a strong, forceful personality. His wife is a South African and a physicist.

**47. Granoff, Dr. Abraham**

Chairman of the Jewish National Fund.

Born in 1890 at Falesti (Bessarabia). Studied law and economics at Universities of Freiburg and Lausanne (Doctor of Law). Joined the staff of the Jewish National Fund in Holland, 1919; appointed its managing director, 1925; elected member (1934) and Chairman (1945) of its Board of Directors. In Palestine since 1922. Author of several books on Palestine land problems on which he is the leading authority. Director or chairman of various development, settlement and water companies. Member of the Executive Council of the Hebrew University and president of two important cultural foundations.

In the Provisional Council of State (1948-49) Mr. Granoff was one of the six representatives of the General Zionists, but he left them at the foundation of the Progressive Party, of which he was elected M.K. (1949). He was not very active in the Knesset. He was at one time Chairman of the Finance Committee, but devoted himself mainly to the National Fund (Keren Kayemet), of which he is now chairman. In 1951 he was elected to the Second Knesset on the Progressive list, but resigned this seat two months later.

**48. Grossman, Meir**

Journalist: Head of Economic Department of Jewish Agency.

Born in Russia in 1888. Studied in St. Petersburg and Berlin Universities. In 1905 he started to participate in Jewish public activities and launched a long journalistic career. During the first World War he joined Jabotinsky in his fight to acquire the right to set up Jewish battalions. After the war he founded, in London, the Jewish Information Bureau. With the establishment of the State he headed the Economic Department of the Jewish Agency. A member of the General Zionists he writes regularly in Hebrew in the world Jewish press.

Dr. Grossman is an affable man and is well disposed towards Britain. His son studied in England and is a member of the M.F.A. His daughter is married to the Head of the Israel Information Office in New York.

**49. Habibi, Emile**

Communist M.K.

Born at Haifa in 1921. Educated at secondary school. Became a journalist and editor of the Communist paper *Al Ittihad*, being prominent in Communist activities in Palestine. He was fifth on the Communist list at the 1949 elections but was unsuccessful, and first entered the Knesset at the 1951 elections. Re-elected in 1955. He is a member of the Communist Central Committee. He is prominent in "Peace Movement" activities and has attended numerous peace congresses. He has visited the United Kingdom twice for conferences of the British Communist Party.

**50. Hacabi, Aloof Mishne Yehoshophat**

Director of Military Intelligence.

Born in Palestine in 1921. Served in the British Army during the second world war. He later became a Company Commander in the Hagana. He is a graduate of the Hebrew University, and for a time served as a Secretary to Sharett. In 1954 he attended a course in France, returning in May 1955, when he took up his present appointment.



Colonel Hacabi is a friendly, good-natured man, though rather intense. He has made a special study of North African affairs, and is regarded as one of Israel's leading experts on Arab affairs.

#### 51. Hacohen, David

Mapai M.K.

Born in 1898 at Homel (White Russia). His father, a distinguished Hebrew writer and founder of co-operative financial institutions, brought him to Palestine as a boy (1907). Educated at Herzliya Gymnasium in Tel Aviv and the military school, Istanbul. Served as a Turkish Army officer in the First World War. Studied at the London School of Economics. A founder of Solel Boneh (1924) and now managing director of it and various other associated companies of the Histadrut and Chairman of the Zim Shipping Company. Became Municipal Councillor, Haifa, in 1927 and was Deputy Mayor from 1948-51. During the Arab rebellion he was associated with Brigadier Wingate in the organisation of the "Night Squads." During the Second World War he collaborated with the Ministry of Economic Warfare in organising pro-Allied broadcasts to Syria and supplied Solel Boneh personnel for work with the British Forces outside Palestine. An important member of the Haganah and believed responsible for its sapper work, in 1946 he was among the Zionist leaders detained at Latrun. Elected M.K. (Mapai) in 1949 and re-elected to Second Knesset in 1951, he became a member of Mapai's Steering Committee and of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. He was an alternate delegate to the 1951 United Nations General Assembly and took a prominent part in Inter-parliamentary Union activities. In July 1953 he accepted, somewhat reluctantly, the post of first Israel Minister to Burma. He, nevertheless, threw himself wholeheartedly into his work and in a short time built up close and apparently friendly ties between the two countries; he also travelled a good deal in the other countries of South-East Asia. In 1954 he again attended the United Nations General Assembly as a member of the Israel Delegation. He returned to Israel in 1955 and was again elected to the Knesset.

Mr. Hacohen is an energetic and forceful man. A very successful business manager, he behaves more like a typical company director than a trade unionist. He is personally friendly but his orientation is rather more towards the United States than towards the United Kingdom. His wife (née Bracha Habas, which is still her *nom de plume*) is a prominent journalist and Mapai intellectual.

#### 52. Hakim, Mgr. George

Greek Catholic Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilee.

Born at Tanta, Egypt, in 1908. Educated at the Jesuit College at Cairo and St. Anne's Seminary, Jerusalem. Ordained priest in 1930, he taught at the Patriarchal School in Beirut and then became moderator and subsequently principal of the Patriarchal School at Cairo. He made a great success of this post. In Egypt he published a French periodical called *Le Lien* and he also founded an Arabic periodical called *Ar-Rabita (The Link)* which is published in Haifa and is the organ of the Greek Catholics in Israel.

In 1943 he came to Haifa as Archbishop. Though at first opposed to the founding of the Jewish State, he has found a *modus vivendi* with the Israel authorities and is allowed to pay visits to Beirut and the Old City of Jerusalem on Church and refugee business. He is anti-Communist, and his activities

among the Arab population in Israel have brought him into violent conflict with the Communist Party. Hakim regards himself as the unofficial leader of the Arab minority in Israel. He identified himself with Mapai at the 1955 general election.

#### 53. Harari, Izhar

Progressive M.K.

Born in 1908 at Jaffa. Educated at the Herzlia Gymnasium at Tel-Aviv, the Sorbonne, the Law School in Jerusalem and the London School of Economics. He also studied at the School of Journalism in Paris. From 1934 he was in private legal practice and in 1938 he became legal adviser to some municipal councils. He was a delegate to Zionist Congresses and a member of the Zionist Actions Committee and of the Central Committee of the Israel Bar Association. In 1948 he joined the Israel army and was appointed vice-president of the Military High Court with the rank of Sgan-Aloof (Lieut.-Colonel). He retired from the army after his election to the Knesset in 1949, where he became chairman of the House Committee and made a considerable contribution to the determining of parliamentary procedure. He was re-elected in 1951 and 1955. He is one of the leading legal experts in the Knesset and plays an active part in debates. He has advocated the unification of education and the passing of a series of fundamental laws to be eventually combined in one constitution. In July 1950 he was a member of the parliamentary delegation to the United Kingdom. In 1953 he was offered the post of first Israel Minister to Canada but turned it down.

#### 54. Hering, Ze'ev

Labour leader.

Born in Poland in 1910. Educated at Warsaw University. Speaks English, German and Polish. Is married and has one son. He spent two years in the early 1950's at the London School of Economics, a period on which he looks back with great pleasure. He is a member of the Central Committee of Mapai and is head of the Histadrut's Organisation Department in which capacity he reports direct to the Secretary-General. He is very serious-minded and commands considerable respect among the leaders of both Mapai and the Histadrut. At 45 he is younger than most responsible persons in the labour movement. He is soberly but firmly pro-British.

#### 55. Herzog, Aloof Mishne Haim Vivian

Commander Jerusalem District.

Born in Belfast, 1918. Son of the Chief Rabbi. Educated in England where he became a barrister-at-law. Served in the British Army in Intelligence and was in Germany when the war ended. He was released in 1946 as a Major. In May 1948 he became Director of Military Intelligence in the Israel Army and built up the Israel Defence Force Intelligence system. He was the first Israel Military Attaché in Washington. He took up his present appointment in November 1954 and has earned the reputation of being moderate and helpful in dealing with border problems in his district.

#### 56. Herzog, Yitzhak

Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazim.

Born at Rodvitski in 1888. Educated at Leeds University (M.A.), and is a D.Litt. of London University. Also studied at the Sorbonne and Ecole des Langues Orientales, Paris. Became a Rabbi in 1910. Was Rabbi of Belfast (1916) and Chief Rabbi of the Irish Free State (1925). Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Community in Palestine since 1936.

resident in Jerusalem. Member of various learned societies and author of numerous books and studies.

A venerable-looking figure in a top hat, Dr. Herzog appears on all national occasions among the leaders of Israel. He is not much consulted by them but wields considerable indirect influence through the religious party in the Knesset. His fierce opposition to the Women's Conscription Amendments introduced by Mr. Ben-Gurion in the spring of 1951 and again in 1953 produced direct conflict between the Rabbinate and Mapai, but on other occasions he has usually managed to keep clear of politics. He has the reputation of being sincerely anglophile. A man of great learning and considerable acumen.

#### 57. Hoofien, Eliezer Siegfried, M.B.E.

Banker.

Born in 1881 at Utrecht. Attended Amsterdam Commercial College and entered a private banking firm at Amsterdam (1899). Public Accountant, Amsterdam (1903-09). Director of the Zionist Central Office, Cologne (1909-12). Came to Palestine in 1912 and entered the Anglo-Palestine Bank (now the Bank Leumi le Israel): assistant general manager (1912), joint general manager (1919), general manager (1924-47), chairman of the board of directors since 1947. Honorary president of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Chamber of Commerce. Chairman and managing director of the General Mortgage Bank and chairman of the Mortgage Bank. In 1948 he was appointed economic co-ordinator attached to the Prime Minister's Office. On the establishment of the State Bank in December 1954, he was appointed chairman of the Advisory Council and the Advisory Committee.

He is a strong personality, influential and respected. He has on several occasions publicly urged drastic reductions in Israel's standard of living to enable her to balance her payments, and has attacked the Prime Minister and the Government for failing to take the necessary measures to avert economic collapse. Since the autumn of 1955 his health has been poor.

#### 58. Horowitz, David

Governor of the State Bank.

Born 1899 at Drohobycz (Galicia). Educated at Lwow and Vienna. Came to Palestine in 1919. Took part in land reclamation, Nahalal (1921). Member, Histadrut Council (1920) and Executive Council (1923). Author of books on economic and political subjects. Economic adviser to the American Economic Committee for Palestine (1932-35). Economic Adviser to the Treasury of the Jewish Agency, Director of its Economic Department and Co-Director of its Economic Research Institute (1935-48). Lecturer at the High School for Law and Economics, Tel Aviv. Was member of various Government committees of the mandatory régime, including the Standing Committee for Commerce and Industry and the Textile Advisory Board. Appeared as economic expert before the Royal Commission of 1937, the Anglo-American Commission of 1946 and the United Nations Commission of 1947. Was attached to the latter as liaison officer and followed it to Lake Success as member of the Jewish Delegation. Director-General of the Ministry of Finance from May 1948 until June 1952, and from 1950-52 was also Economic Adviser to the Government. In March 1953 he was appointed first director of the new State Bank and put in charge of the preparatory work. A month later he also became chairman of the Foreign Currency Board. He became Governor of the State Bank when it opened on December 1, 1954. A director of Histadrut workers' housing companies, of a South African group of companies and other enterprises.

Mr. Horowitz is a man of unusual energy and intelligence and for four years dominated the Ministry of Finance. He had all the strings of financial and economic policy in his hands. He is an able and skilful negotiator, and played the leading Israel part in the conclusion of the Anglo-Israel financial agreement of March 1950 concerning the liquidation of the Mandate, and the negotiations for the release of Israel's sterling balances, and the unsuccessful negotiations for sterling credits for the purchase of oil in 1952.

He did not see eye to eye with Mr. Ben-Gurion and resigned his office as soon as Mr. Kaplan left the Ministry of Finance. Until 1952 he carried the main burden of keeping Israel solvent, and the strain told on him heavily.

#### 59. Hushi (or Khoushy), Aba

Mayor of Haifa.

Born 1898 in Poland and educated there. Came to Palestine in 1920 and first worked as a labourer in Haifa port and in the settlements. Later occupied various positions in the Haifa Labour Council and became its secretary. He was one of the founders of the Palestine Labour Union.

In due course he became a member of the Histadrut Executive and of the management of Solel Boneh. In 1949, as a member of Mapai, he was elected to the Knesset, and remained a member until January 1951, when he was elected Mayor of Haifa. Re-elected Mayor in 1955.

A man of great energy, Mr. Hushi is dictatorial and ruthless but unquestionably able. He has great plans for the improvement of Haifa and is throwing himself wholeheartedly into them. He has for long enjoyed good relations with Arabs and advocated solidarity between Jewish and Arab labour.

#### 60. Hyman, Zemach

Consul-General in New York.

Born in London in 1889, the son of an East-End Rabbi. He and his wife met when they were medical students. He served in Palestine during the First World War in the Jewish Legion and settled in the country in 1922, joining the staff of Barclays Bank (D.C. & O.) and becoming manager of its Western Jerusalem branch. He was appointed Economic Counsellor in Washington in 1950 and transferred to South Africa as Minister at the end of 1951. In 1951 he was appointed Consul-General in New York. He has three children.

#### 61. Izakson, Zvi

Chairman of the board of directors of the Pardess Syndicate Co-operative Society.

Born in Minsk in 1888, he came to Palestine as a child. Studied at the Mikve Israel Agricultural School near Tel Aviv and also in Turkey. During the first World War he lived in the United States and took part in all local and Zionist activities. He returned to Palestine in 1920 and settled in Jerusalem, where he founded a carpet factory. In 1926 he planted an orange grove in Petah Tikva, and from then on started to devote himself to citrus planting and its marketing. In 1932 he moved to Tel Aviv, at which time he became a leading figure in the Farmers' Association; he is one of those responsible for the setting up of the Palestine Citrus Marketing Board. He is very active in communal affairs, is a member of the Executive Committee of the General Zionist Organisation, and president and chairman of various companies and organisations, e.g., president, Farmers' Federation of Israel;



chairman, board of directors, Pardess Syndicate Co-operative Society, (Limited) (dealing in citrus); chairman of the Jewish Farmers' Company (Limited); director of Marine Trust Company (Limited). He was a member of Israel's Citrus Marketing Delegation to England and Europe in the years 1949-51.

## 62. Joseph, Dr. Dov (Bernard)

Mapai M.K.

Born in 1899 at Montreal. Studied law at London and McGill Universities (Ph.D., LL.B.). Was President of the "Young Judea" organisation in Canada. Came to Palestine in 1921. Was in private legal practice in Jerusalem and for several years served as legal adviser and Deputy Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, for which he went on special missions to the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and South Africa. Member of its Executive, 1945-48. One of the Jewish leaders detained at Latrun in 1946. Originally a Revisionist, he joined Mapai in 1933. In 1948 he became Military Governor of Jewish Jerusalem and successfully organised essential supplies during the siege. Elected Mapai M.K., 1949, and appointed Minister of Supply and Rationing, he succeeded, despite much public grumbling, in applying an "austerity" programme of rationing and price control which did much to stem inflation. He was also "temporarily" Minister of Agriculture.

In the Cabinet reshuffle of October 1950, which was largely occasioned by criticism of his handling of economic controls, he took over the Ministry of Communications. Re-elected to the Second Knesset in 1951, he became Minister of Trade and Industry and also Minister of Justice in Mr. Ben-Gurion's reconstituted coalition Government. In the Government reorganisation of June 1952 he was relieved of the Ministry of Justice, but continued as Minister of Trade and Industry. On the entry of the General Zionists into the coalition in December 1952, he had to give up the Ministry of Trade and Industry to them but retained his seat in the Cabinet. In June 1953 he was appointed Minister for Development, which post he retained on the formation of the coalition by Mr. Sharett in January 1954. In the Government reshuffle following the 1955 elections he had to surrender his Ministry which was given to Mapam.

Dr. Joseph has a rather mild and unimpressive exterior, but is endowed with considerable courage and intelligence. By family connexions and personal inclination he is anglophile. His wife also is Canadian born. A daughter was killed in the Palestine War in 1948.

## 63. Josephthal, Dr. Giora

Treasurer of the Jewish Agency.

Born at Nuremberg in 1912. A leading member of the Jewish Agency Executive, he was for a number of years head of the Absorption Department of the Jewish Agency and in 1952 succeeded Eshkol as treasurer. He is a member of kibbutz Gal-Ed, near Haifa. A leading member of Mapai, he was in August 1951 re-elected to the Zionist Executive as a Mapai member. In March 1952 he was a member of the Israel delegation which negotiated with representatives of Western Germany for the payment of reparations. Two months later he was offered the Ministry of Finance by Mr. Ben-Gurion but refused it. In October 1952 he was appointed chairman of the German Reparations Purchasing Company.

## 64. Kidron, Mordechai

Diplomat. Deputy to permanent Israel delegate to United Nations.

Born in South Africa and served in Second World War in South African Air Force and Infantry. Came to Palestine after the war and studied at the Hebrew University. During the siege of Jerusalem he was military governor of the southern part of the city. After the Palestine war he joined the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was sent abroad on several missions. He became in 1949 first secretary and in 1950 counsellor at the Israel Legation in London and in 1951 returned to the Ministry as head of the International Relations Division.

Mr. Kidron has an almost exaggeratedly English manner, but cannot be relied on as pro-British on that account. He is efficient and quick. His wife is Italian, and pleasant.

## 65. Kohn, Dr. Yehuda Pinhas (Leo)

Political Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the President.

Born Frankfurt-am-Main in 1894. Educated at the universities of Strasbourg, Berlin and Heidelberg (Doctor of Law). Secretary of the Central Office of the World Zionist Organisation, London, 1919-23. Secretary of the Hebrew University Committee in London from 1924-25 and of the Board of Governors of the university from 1925-31. Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation 1931-33, during which time he wrote a book on the Irish Constitution. Secretary of the Political Committee of the Jewish Agency 1934-48. In 1948 he became political adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has served with successive Israel delegations to United Nations General Assemblies and in 1948 he produced a draft constitution for Israel, which has never been adopted. He is one of the Government representatives on the Executive Council of the Hebrew University.

Dr. Kohn is a charming and scholarly man of conservative views, but does not appear to wield or to wish to wield very great power within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 66. Kol, Moshe

Member of the Zionist Executive.

Born at Pinsk in 1911. Educated there and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, having come to Palestine in 1932. Always an active Zionist, he was one of the founders of the General Zionist Organisation in Palestine. He was appointed to the Zionist Executive in 1937 and was first chairman of the Central General Labour Office in Israel. He was a member of the Provisional Government from May 1948 until February 1949, but since 1949 has concerned himself almost exclusively with Jewish Agency affairs, being in charge of Youth Aliyah, and with the organisation of Jewish appeals. In 1949 he was one of the General Zionists who formed the Progressive Party and was third on the party's electoral list, but did not take his seat. In July 1951 he was again elected, but resigned two months later, when he became Deputy Treasurer of the new Jewish Agency Executive and again head of the Youth Aliyah Department of the Agency. He was elected to the Knesset again in 1955 but once more gave up his seat. He still sits in the Zionist Executive as a General Zionist.

## 67. Kollek, Theodore (Teddy)

Head of the Prime Minister's Office and of the Government Tourist Office.

Born at Vienna in 1911. A member of kibbutz Ein-Gev. He acted as Haganah envoy to the United States before the end of the Mandate and was a leading Haganah intelligence officer, and was also active in the Zionist cause in England as a member of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency.

In 1950 he became head of the North American Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1950 also he acted as secretary to the conference of American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and at the end of the year was appointed Minister at the Israel Embassy at Washington to supervise fund-raising activities. In 1952 he was released to go to Harvard, but a month later was recalled to Israel and was appointed head of the Prime Minister's Office. He was appointed Head of the Government Tourist Office in 1955.

He speaks good English and is frank, forthcoming and intelligent.

## 68. Kosloff, Israel R.

Fuel Adviser to the Government.

Born in 1920 in Jerusalem. From 1939 to 1946 he studied at the University of Chicago, from which he obtained degrees in economics. From 1944 to 1946 was employed by the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. He then returned to Jerusalem to take up an appointment with the Palestine Economic Corporation. In 1947 he paid a second visit to the United States and was employed by the Richfield Oil Company of Los Angeles. In 1949 he returned to Israel and entered Government service as an expert on oil matters, later receiving the appointment of Fuel Adviser and Petroleum Commissioner.

Mr. Kosloff has an excellent brain and is a hard worker. He has acquired considerable experience in the technique of negotiation, having represented his country's interests at discussions in London, Washington, Moscow and other European capitals. Inclined to a certain vanity and to a hot temper which can temporarily cloud his judgment, he is apt also to irritate people by his tactics of playing off one party against another. He does not enjoy the confidence of the foreign oil companies.

Mr. Kosloff's wife is the daughter of the late Mr. Max W. Ball, oil geologist in Washington, who has devoted a good deal of study to the oil and mineral resources in the Near East.

## 69. Laskov, Aloof (Brigadier) Chaim

Head of the General Staff Branch and Deputy Chief-of-Staff.

Born in Russia in 1919. Came to Palestine as a child and was educated at the Reali School at Haifa. He served in the Haganah as a young man and from 1936-37 was a member of Wingate's night squads. From 1941-46 he saw much active service in the British Army, reaching the rank of major. He joined the Israel Army in 1948 and became a staff officer, a battalion commander and later a brigade commander. In August 1948 he became Director of Training, a post which he held for over three years, during which time he wrote some of the army textbooks. He paid an official visit to the United Kingdom in 1951 and in August of that year was appointed Commander of the Air Force. He was removed from this command in May 1953, after differences with General Makleff, and went to study in England. He returned in August 1955, having benefited enormously from his stay in England and having acquired a very balanced outlook on life. He was immediately appointed head of "G" Branch and Deputy Chief-of-Staff, Brigadier Laskov speaks English, German and Arabic in addition to Hebrew.

Of all the senior officers in the Israel armed services Brigadier Laskov is the most outspokenly pro-British and has a great admiration for British service methods. He is direct and forceful and has the reputation of being an extremely hard worker. He has great powers of organisation, personality and drive.

## 70. Lavon, Pinhas

General Secretary of the Histadrut and Mapai M.K.

Born 1904 at Kopyczun in Poland. Studied law at Lwow University. A founder of the Gordonia Youth Movement, he came to Palestine in 1929 and with its first pioneers participated in the foundation of Hulda communal settlement, of which he is still a member. Active in foundation and enlargement of the federation of Mapai communal villages (Hever Hakvutsoth). Served in the secretariat of Mapai 1935-37, and has been on its Executive Committee since 1943. Member of the Histadrut Executive since 1944 and secretary-general from July 1949 to October 1950. Chairman of the Solel Boneh Council and member of the Zionist General Council, Mapai M.K., 1949. Took a leading part in efforts made at the beginning of 1950 to bring Mapam into the Government. Led a Knesset delegation to the United Kingdom in July 1950. In October 1950 he became Minister of Agriculture, a post he held till October 1951, when he left the Government as a result of differences with his colleagues over the priority to be given to foreign currency allocations for food imports. Re-elected to second Knesset, 1951 and to the third Knesset in 1955.

In 1952 he was made Minister without Portfolio and on several occasions acted as Minister of Defence in the absence of Mr. Ben-Gurion. On the latter's resignation as Prime Minister in December 1953, he again served as acting Minister of Defence and was confirmed as Minister in Mr. Sharett's Government. He resigned from the Government in February 1955 after differences with Mr. Sharett over defence policy.

Mr. Lavon is a leading Mapai personality. He has for many years been a close associate of Mr. Ben-Gurion and has, at times, been second to none in his advocacy of a rigorous "activist" policy.

Became General Secretary of the Histadrut in the reshuffle following Mr. Sharett's resignation in June 1956.

## 71. Levanon, Chaim

Mayor of Tel Aviv.

Born in 1899 in Cracow, Galicia. Educated at a Yeshiva and at Cracow University. After the first world war he entered an engineering college and was one of the founders of the Mazrachi Youth Movement. He went to an agricultural training farm for Zionist pioneers and in 1927 he came to Israel and settled in Petah Tiqva, becoming a teacher. He was a founder of the General Zionist Youth Movement and Secretary-General of the party in his area. In 1931 he became Secretary-General of the whole party, travelling abroad frequently on party missions. He was one of the founders and directors of the party newspaper *Haboker*. After 1939 he established and became secretary of the General Zionist Workers Association. In 1951 he was elected a councillor and subsequently Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv. In December 1952 he became Acting Mayor when Mr. Rokach became Minister of the Interior, and in April 1953 he was elected Mayor. He was re-elected Mayor in 1955 against the strong opposition of Mapai.

## 72. Levavi, Arie

Minister to Yugoslavia.

Born at Vilna in 1912. On joining the Israel Foreign Service he was posted to the Israel Legation in Moscow, returning to the Ministry in 1950 on his appointment as head of the Eastern European Division. In May 1952, on the reorganisation of the Ministry, he became Assistant Director-General in charge of the Eastern Europe and Mediterranean areas. In 1954 he was appointed Israel Minister to Yugoslavia.



**73. Levin, Rabbi Yitzhak Meir**

Agudat Israel M.K.

Born 1894 at Gur (Poland), the son of a Rabbi. After an ultra-religious education he helped to found and later presided over the Polish branch of the World Agudath Israel. Served as representative of Orthodox Jewry in the Warsaw Community Council and was for many years a member of the Polish Sejm. He frequently visited Palestine and, though opposed to political Zionism, did much to propagate the idea of immigration in orthodox circles.

Settling in Palestine in 1940, Rabbi Levin, as a leading member of the Palestine Agudists, went on several missions to the United States and later became Chairman of the World Executive of the Agudath Israel. He was one of the organisers of the "Rescue Committee" for European Jewry. When in May, 1948, the Agudists ceased posing as "non-political" and agreed to participate in the Government of the new State, Rabbi Levin entered the Provisional Government as Minister of Social Welfare. Later in the year his party combined with the Mizrahi groups to form the United Religious Front and he retained the Social Welfare portfolio after the 1949 and 1951 elections, in both of which he was returned to the Knesset at the head of the Agudat Israel list. He ceased to be a Minister when the Agudist parties left the Government in September 1952. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1955.

A small bespectacled man with a large beard, wearing a long black coat and skull cap, Rabbi Levin cuts a very rabbinical figure. He is given to making scenes over questions of religious observance, equality of rights for religious Jews and so on. But like many ultra-orthodox Jews he combines reactionary obscurantism with shrewd business capacity.

**74. Livneh, Eliezer**

Former Mapai M.K.

Born 1902 at Lodz (Poland). Educated at a secondary school in Germany and privately in Germany and England. Came to Palestine in 1920 and became a member of kibbutz Ein Harod. Visited Germany from 1929 to 1931 and on return to Palestine joined Mapai. In 1935-36 he was in the United Kingdom on behalf of the Kibbutz Meuhad movement. He became in due course a member of the Histadrut executive and one of Mapai's leading publicists. He served on the editorial staff of *Davar* and the Jewish Agency "Maarachoth" and from 1948-49 was editor of the Mapai daily newspaper *Hador*. He also edited the Haganah underground news sheet from 1941-47. He became very anti-Soviet and now edits his own weekly paper *Beterem*. In 1950 he declined an offer of the post of Director of the Voice of America Hebrew broadcasts. He is a member of the Zionist Executive and the Mapai Secretariat and a founder of the Israel-America Friendship League. As a result of differences with his party, he was placed at the end of the party's list for the Third Knesset and was not re-elected.

Mr. Livneh is able and a forceful speaker; although much criticised within the party for his comparatively luxurious way of life, he is recognised as an authority on foreign affairs on which he often takes an independent line. He professes admiration for the United Kingdom, though he is generally critical of our "passive" policy towards the Arab-Israel dispute.

**75. Locker, Berl**

Mapai M.K. Former Chairman, Jewish Agency Executive.

Born in 1887 in Poland. Studied economics and political science at Czernowitz University. Came to Palestine before the First World War and helped to found the labour movement. Originally member of the Poalei Zion party (World Secretary 1918-28 and

United States Secretary 1928-31) he later joined Mapai. Member of the Jewish Agency Executive since 1931 and its representative in London from 1937 onwards, he succeeded Mr. Ben-Gurion as its chairman in 1948. He was re-elected chairman in 1951 and is also joint president of the Foundation Fund (Keren Hayesod). He was elected to the Knesset in 1955.

Mr. Locker has spent a large part of his life abroad. He took an active part in the World Federation of Trade Unions as representative of the Histadrut. He speaks fluent English, and is friendly but not very impressive.

**76. Looz, Kadish**

Minister of Agriculture.

Born in Russia in 1895. Educated at Karlsruhe and Odessa. Settled in Palestine in 1920. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Histadrut and the Central Committee of Mapai. He has been a member of the Knesset since 1951, is one of Mapai's leading agricultural experts and lives at one of the party's collective settlements in Galilee.

**77. Lourie, Arthur**

Deputy Director-General, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Born in South Africa in 1903. Educated at Cape Town, Cambridge and Harvard (M.A. LL.B.). Was in private law practice in South Africa and lecturer in Roman Dutch Law at the Witwatersrand University 1927-32. Political secretary to the Jewish Agency in London 1933. After the Second World War he became director of the United Nations office of the Jewish Agency in New York and in 1946 he was liaison officer with the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry in Palestine. In 1948 he became Israel Consul-General in New York and Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. In 1950 he was given the personal rank of Minister. He returned to Israel in 1953 as Director of the British Commonwealth Division. Promoted Deputy Director-General in 1955, his duties involve the supervision of the British Commonwealth, United States and Western European Divisions of the Ministry. Mr. Lourie is intelligent with an unobtrusive personality, and is generally as helpful and constructive as he can be within the limits of his authority. He has been married twice and has two children by his first wife.

**78. Makleff, Mordechai**

Born in 1920 at Motza, Palestine, of a family most of whose members were murdered by Arabs in 1929. Graduate of the Technical College, Haifa. On leaving it, joined Wingate's "night squads" and served in the Haganah. Joined the British Army in 1941 and served till 1945, first with the Buffs in the Middle East and then in the Jewish Brigade in Europe, rising to the rank of major. Was an officer of the Israel unit which took Haifa from the Arabs in April, 1948, and subsequently fought as junior and senior officer (Divisional Chief of Staff) throughout the 1948 campaign in Galilee. Headed the military delegation at the armistice negotiations with Lebanon and with Syria, 1949, and then became Director of Staff Duties and in November 1949 Deputy Chief of Staff. Attended a course at the Administrative Staff College, Henley, in 1952, and subsequently visited the United States. In December 1952, he was appointed Chief of Staff in succession to General Yadin and promoted to "Rav Aloof."

Although he had made a high reputation as a fighter in Israel and was undoubtedly an able administrator, he lacked the personality for his high

office as Chief of Staff and this was, no doubt, one of the reasons for his replacement by General Dayan in December 1953. He has since been general manager of the Government-controlled Dead Sea Potash Company, and as such has recently been criticised over the company's disappointing production results.

He speaks English and Arabic. Married.

**79. Mazar, Dr. Benjamin**

President and Rector of the Hebrew University.

Born Grodno, Poland, in 1906. Educated at schools in Russia and Germany and at the Universities of Berlin and Giessen (Ph.D., 1938). Came to Palestine in 1929 and worked as an archaeologist, carrying out a number of excavations. Connected with the Hebrew University since 1943, he was chairman of its Institute of Jewish Studies and lecturer on the historical geography of Palestine. In 1951 he was elected to a professorship at the University, and in June 1952 he became Rector. In March 1953 he was also elected president of the University.

Dr. Mazar is married to the daughter of the President.

**80. Meir, Mrs. Golda (formerly Myerson)**

Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Born in 1898 at Kiev. 1906, emigrated with her father, a carpenter, to Milwaukee, United States, where she attended high school, graduated at the Teachers' Training College (1920) and joined the Poalei Zion (Socialist-Zionist) Party. Settled in Palestine in 1921, starting as member and agricultural labourer of Merhavia Kibbutz (Hashomer Hatsair), 1921-24. With Solel Boneh, 1924-26. Since 1928, member of the Working Women's Council and its representative in the Histadrut Executive. Associated with Mapai since its foundation (1930). Very active as Histadrut fund-raiser, frequently visiting the United States and the United Kingdom; spent the whole of 1932-33 in America in this capacity. Delegate to Zionist Congresses since 1929 and to the Imperial Labour Conference, London, 1930. Member of the Zionist General Council. Chairman of the Sick Fund (Kupat Holim), 1936-48. Member of the Va'ad Leumi, 1938-48. Director of a number of local economic and cultural institutions. Head of the Histadrut Political Department from 1940 and secretary of the Histadrut Executive, 1945-46. Member of the War Economic Advisory Council set up in 1943. Acting head of the Jewish Agency Political Department during the internment of political leaders in 1946, and head of its Jerusalem branch, 1947.

In May 1948 Mrs. Myerson became member of the Provisional Council of State but resigned from it on appointment as Israel Minister in Moscow (August 1948 to April 1949). Elected a Mapai M.K. in 1949. Mrs. Meir is a strong and attractive personality and a good speaker, being probably Israel's best fund-raiser in the United States. She made no headway with the Russians and was not happy in Moscow. Her husband died in May 1951. In 1953 she led the Israel delegation to the second half of the United Nations General Assembly. She became Foreign Minister in the reshuffle following Mr. Sharett's resignation in June 1956.

**81. Meron, Dr. Gershon Yaakov**

Economist and General Manager of the Israel Fuel Corporation.

Born 1904 at Mannheim, Germany. Studied at the University of Heidelberg where he took the degrees of doctor of laws and doctor of economic science. Lecturer in commercial law, 1928. Served in various Government capacities, 1929-32. Left Germany in 1932 for Palestine where he was first employed with Barclays Bank. Manager of the Jacob Japhet Bank,

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Tel Aviv, 1934-35. Financial and economic adviser to Solel Boneh, 1945-48. Director of the Economic Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1948-51. During 1950 was also for some months Director-General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Became General Manager of the Israel Fuel Corporation, September 1951. He is also Honorary Consul for the Philippine Republic.

Has written several books on sociological, economic and legal subjects and on Germany. Published, 1944, "Jewish Labour Economy in Palestine" in co-operation with Ernest Kahn, and, 1947, "Labour Enterprise in Palestine." Extremely intelligent, Dr. Meron is a friendly and likeable person, strongly pro-British and keen to strengthen Anglo-Israel relations. In spite of a somewhat sorrowful demeanour, he has a strong sense of quiet humour.

**82. Mikunis, Shmuel**

Communist M.K. and secretary-general of the Israel Communist Party.

Born in 1904 in Poland. Came to Palestine in 1921. Employed by the Shell Company as an engineer in Tel Aviv and was at one time an actor at the "Ohel" Theatre, of which he was one of the founders. Worked with the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement. Imprisoned in 1941 for illegal Communist activities. Published *Kol Ha'am* in Tel Aviv, 1944, and was at one time Secretary-General of the League for Friendly Relations with the U.S.S.R. Studied tactics and propaganda methods of Communist organisations in France and after the World War was in touch with French resistance and Jewish Communist circles. Communist member of the Elected Assembly, 1944. Elected leader of the Palestine Communist Party in 1945. As such, he represented the Party at the British Empire Communist Parties Conference in London, 1947, became Member of the Provisional Council of State, 1948. In 1948 he arranged a merger with local Arab Communist elements and was elected Deputy, 1949, at the head of the combined "Israel Communist Party" list. He visits Moscow on an average once a year ostensibly for reasons of health.

He is firmly established as the leader of the party. All through he has remained a consistent supporter of Russian policy and virulent critic of the Government. He speaks fluent Russian and Yiddish.

**83. Moses, Siegfried**

State Comptroller.

Born in Germany in 1887, educated at Berlin. President of the Zionist Organisation in Germany before coming to Israel in 1937. Has spent his professional life in law and public auditing. Has written extensively on economic and financial subjects, particularly income tax. His post, to which he was appointed in 1949, is not unlike that of Auditor-General in the United Kingdom.

**84. Namir, Mordechai**

Minister of Labour.

Born Bratolubovka, Ukraine in 1897. Educated in Russia. Came to Palestine in 1924. Worked as an unskilled labourer and then as circulation manager of the Labour newspaper *Davar*. He then worked for some time as secretary of the Tel-Aviv branch of Achdut Avoda (the Jewish Labour Party) and on his own account as a statistician. In 1929 he was made director of the Statistical Department of the Histadrut. In 1933 he became also a municipal councillor in Tel-Aviv. In 1940 he was detained by the Palestine Government on charges of agitating against the 1939 White Paper and the Land Transfer



Regulations. In 1943 he became Secretary-General of Mapai and from 1944-48 he was head of the Trade Union Department of the Histadrut and a member of the Histadrut Secretariat. He was also a delegate to Zionist congresses.

In May 1948 he was sent as a special envoy to Roumania, and later as counsellor to Moscow, where in 1949 he became minister. Returned to Israel in December 1950 to become General Secretary of the Histadrut. Elected to Second Knesset on Mapai list in 1951 and re-elected in 1955. He was appointed Minister of Labour in June 1956 in the Cabinet reshuffle which followed Mr. Sharett's resignation.

Mr. Namir is a widower and although quiet and unpretentious, a man of strong personality and obvious integrity. He speaks a little English.

#### 85. Naphtali, Dr. Peretz

Minister without portfolio.  
Born at Berlin in 1888. Educated at Berlin University. Worked as a journalist from 1912 and was economic editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* 1921-26. Manager of the Economic Research Bureau of the German Labour Movement 1926-33. Was one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party in Germany and of the Social Democrat Trade Unions. Represented German trade unions in the Reichs-Wirtschaftsrat. Joined the Poalei Zion. Came to Palestine in 1933 and became a lecturer at Haifa Institute of Technology and Tel Aviv. Became managing director of the Workers' Bank (1938-45) and a member of the Tel Aviv municipality (1939) and later economic adviser to the Prime Minister. Elected to the Knesset in 1949 on the Mapai list, he was prominent as chairman of economic committees. Re-elected in 1951, he became Minister without portfolio in the reconstituted coalition, with charge of economic co-ordination. This function led in 1952 to chairmanship of the Economic Advisory Council, and in June 1952, on the reorganisation of the Government, he became Minister of Agriculture. He was re-elected to the Knesset in July 1955 and in November was appointed Minister without portfolio. He is a member of the Histadrut Executive.

Dr. Naphtali is one of Israel's leading Socialist economists.

#### 86. Nissim, Itzhak

Chief Rabbi of the Sephardim.  
Born 1896 in Iraq, where he had his religious education. Came to Palestine in 1926. He was comparatively obscure until elected to his present position in February 1955, after bitter wrangling in the religious community.

#### 87. Nurock, Mordecai (Max)

Minister to Australia and New Zealand.  
Born in Dublin in 1893 and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Served in the British Army from 1915-19 and came to Palestine in 1919 as secretary to the Zionist Commission. In 1920 he joined the Colonial Administrative Service and served in it in Palestine from 1920-36, beginning as Assistant Private Secretary to the High Commissioner and later becoming Acting Chief Secretary in the Palestine Administration and Secretary to the Customs Tariff Board. From 1936-45 he served in Uganda in several capacities, including those of Deputy Governor of Uganda and Uganda member of the East African Defence Council. From 1945-47 he served as Financial Adviser in the local government and internal communications division of the Control Commission for Germany, and subsequently as Deputy Director of the Division. From 1947-49 he was Civil Establishment Officer in the Allied Commission for Austria. In 1949 he came to Israel

as adviser to the Government on Personnel Affairs (1949-51) and Financial Secretary to the Hebrew University (1951-52). Mr. Nurock is married and has two married daughters. Pleasant and amiable he is reported to be efficient and extremely hard working.

#### 88. Nurok, Rabbi Mordecai

Hapoel Hamizrahi-Hamizrahi M.K.  
Born in Latvia in 1884 and educated at religious schools and the University of St. Petersburg. Was a delegate to the Sixth Zionist Congress and to all Zionist Congresses from the Twelfth to the Twenty-Second. He was a member of the Latvian Parliament and was at one time Minister for Jewish Affairs in the Latvian Government. A war-time refugee, his entire family were wiped out by the Nazis in Riga. He was later active in organising illegal immigration from the U.S.S.R. to Palestine by way of Latvia and Danzig. He came to Palestine from Siberia in 1945.

In Israel Rabbi Nurok became a member of the Conservative Religious Mizrahi Party and was elected to the Knesset in 1949. He took a prominent part in inter-parliamentary union affairs and led a Knesset delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference at Dublin in 1950 and to another in Turkey in 1951. He was re-elected to the Second Knesset in 1951 and in November 1952 was appointed Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the Coalition Government. He voted against the Government, however, over reparations from Germany. In November 1952 he was put forward as a possible candidate for President. A month later he relinquished the Ministry of Posts on the formation of the new Coalition Government and refused the post of Deputy Minister for Social Welfare. In 1955 he was re-elected to the Knesset on the joint Hapoel Hamizrahi-Hamizrahi list.

Rabbi Nurok is a dignified and respected figure and is not afraid of taking an independent line. He is friendly but ponderous and speaks German and Russian but no English.

#### 89. Olshan, Yitzhak

President of the Supreme Court.  
Born in Lithuania in 1895. Came to Palestine in 1912. Served in the Jewish Legion of the British Army in the First World War. Educated at the London School of Economics. Took up private legal practice in 1927 after four years as liaison officer between Histadrut and the British Labour Party. Founder member of Haganah, in which he served until 1948. Became a Judge of the Supreme Court in the same year.

#### 90. Onn, Zeev

Histadrut Leader.  
Born Poland, 1900. Educated in a Rabbinical college. Came to Israel in 1920 since when he has been active in the organisation and direction of co-operative enterprises. In 1949 he became a member of the Executive Bureau of the Histadrut and in the same year was appointed Secretary-General of Hevrat Ha'ovdim (the controlling body of the industrial and co-operative enterprises of the Histadrut). Also a member of the Central Committee of Mapai and of the Council of the Bank of Israel.

#### 91. Pearlman, Moshe

Former Director of the Government Information Services.

Born in London, 1911. Educated at the London School of Economics. Was a journalist in London, New York and Palestine from 1934 to 1938. In 1938 he became Public Relations Officer of the Jewish Agency in London. He served in the British army

from 1940 to 1946 and was demobilised as a major. In 1948 he was appointed director of the Foreign Press Division of the Public Information Office and in 1951 was made head of the Government Press Service, at the same time holding active rank as an officer in the Israel army. Later he was made head of all Government information services, including broadcasting, films, the press information office and the publicity department. He has now been appointed adviser to the Prime Minister on information, a new post, but has not yet taken up duty.

Disconcertingly like Groucho Marx in appearance, Mr. Pearlman has established a reputation for minor eccentricities. His actions do not always fulfil the promise of his affable address, and it may be doubted whether he has wholly shed the anti-British sentiments voiced in his book on the Israel army.

#### 92. Rabin, Aluf Yitzhak

Born in Palestine in 1922. Graduated from a Palestine Agricultural School. Served in Palmach units in Syria under the British in World War II. Commanded a battalion in the War of Independence. He attended a course at the Staff College, Camberley, in 1953 and was reported as having a good brain and having worked hard, but as having limited tactical knowledge. He was appointed Head of Training Command at the end of 1953, an appointment he retained until May 1956, when he was appointed Commander, Northern Command.

He seems a quiet, friendly man, but is shy and awkward in company.

#### 93. Raphael, Gideon

Foreign Ministry official.  
Born in 1919 at Shaltenberg. Little is known of him until January 1950, when he represented Israel at meetings of the Palestine Conciliation Commission in Geneva. In the same year he was sent to New York as Counsellor on the Israel Delegation to the United Nations, and attended the General Assembly as an alternate delegate. He attended the General Assembly again in 1951 and has also been present at meetings of the Security Council at which various aspects of the Israel-Arab problem have been discussed. In 1953 he was appointed Counsellor at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in charge of Middle East and United Nations Political Affairs. In 1956 he became Adviser on Special Political Questions, particularly those to do with the United Nations.

Raphael is the leading exponent of the policy of "direct talks" with the Arab States, and prides himself (probably mistakenly) on his intimate knowledge of the Arab mentality. He is Levantine in appearance, manner and attitude of mind, and suffers from the typical Israel failings of confusing ends and means, and thinking that a debating point scored is an advantage gained.

#### 94. Raphael, Itzhak

Member of the Jewish Agency Executive and Hapoel Hamizrahi-Hamizrahi M.K.

Born in 1914 at Sasow, Galicia. Educated at religious schools in Poland, the University of Lvov and the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. He was secretary of a religious workers' movement in Galicia and on coming to Palestine in 1935 became a member of the Va'ad Leumi and a leading member of the religious workers' party Hapoel Hamizrahi. He soon became a prominent figure in the World Zionist Organisation, becoming a director of the Jewish National Fund and from 1941-47 director of the Trade Department of the Jewish Agency and in 1948 a member of the Jewish Agency Executive. In the Palestine War he was a member of the Jerusalem Committee who ran Jerusalem throughout the siege.

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From 1949 onwards he was head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department and as such was primarily responsible for the organisation of the flow of Jewish immigrants to Israel. In 1951 he was elected to the Knesset on the Hapoel Hamizrahi's list and in the same year he became Hapoel Hamizrahi's representative on the Zionist Executive.

#### 95. Riftin, Yaakov

Mapam M.K.  
Born in Poland in 1901. High school education. Joined Hashomer Hatzair in Poland and came to Palestine in 1929. Worked as a farmer in several kibbutzim, was a delegate to several Zionist congresses and undertook numerous missions on behalf of the labour movement. Attended the 1947 United Nations General Assembly as a member of the Jewish Agency delegation. Elected a Mapam M.K. in 1949, he emerged as one of the leaders of the extreme Left-wing pro-Soviet wing of the party. He is a member of the Zionist Executive, the Mapam Central Committee, the Israel-U.S.S.R. Friendship League, the Kibbutz Artsi Executive and the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of the Knesset. When the pro-Soviet Sneh group broke away from Mapam in January 1953, it was generally assumed that he would join them, but his ties with his kibbutz were too strong and he did not do so, being subsequently denounced by the group as a Titoist. He was, however, deprived by Mapam of his office as Political Secretary, though he remained a member of the party's central committee. Member of kibbutz Ein Shemer.

Mr. Riftin is a living example of the contradiction in Mapam between Stalinist ideals and devotion to Zionist and kibbutz life.

#### 96. Rokach, Israel, C.B.E.

General Zionist M.K.  
Born in 1896 at Jaffa. Educated at Technical Institutes of Lausanne and Zürich. Worked as electrical engineer in the United Kingdom and Palestine. Municipal Councillor, Tel Aviv, since 1922; Vice-Mayor, 1927; Mayor from 1936 to 1953. Former member of the War Economic Advisory Council (1943) and of the Citrus Control Board. A director of various cultural, political and economic enterprises. Elected General Zionist M.K., 1949, and re-elected to Second Knesset, 1951.

When the General Zionists entered Mr. Ben-Gurion's Coalition Government in December 1952, he became Minister of Interior, subsequently resigning (with every sign of reluctance) as Mayor of Tel Aviv. He remained Minister of the Interior in the coalition formed by Mr. Sharett in January 1954 but relinquished the post in 1955 when the General Zionists withdrew from the Government.

Mr. Rokach is a powerful personality and shares the leadership of the General Zionist Party with Mr. Bernstein. He is a tough and none too scrupulous politician and, though energetic, seems lacking in commonsense. He and Mr. Ben-Gurion have hated each other for years. He is well-disposed towards the United Kingdom and is agreeable but rather self-important. Married.

#### 97. Rokach, Isaac

Chairman of the Pardess Syndicate (Citrus Growers) and leading member of the Citrus Marketing Board and head of the Consolidated Maritime Agency, who are agents in Israel for the British Conference Lines.

Born near Tel Aviv in 1894. Educated in Palestine and at a school of commerce in Lausanne. Has since been in business and in farming. He served in the Turkish Army in the war of 1914-18.

Mr. Rokach is brother of Israel Rokach, and appears to be an influential figure.



**98. Rosen, Pinhas-Felix**

Leader of Progressive Party and Minister of Justice.

Born in 1887 in Berlin. Studied law at Universities of Freiburg and Berlin. Leader of Zionist youth organisations in Germany. Served six years in the German Army, including the First World War. President of the Zionist Federation of Germany, 1920-23. Spent 1923-25 in Palestine. Returned to Germany 1925. In London, 1926-31, as member of the World Zionist Executive in charge of its Organisation Department. Settled in Palestine 1931; in private legal practice there, 1932-48. Municipal Councillor, Tel Aviv, since 1935. One of the founders (1941) of the Aliya Hadasha Party (new immigrants, mostly from Germany and Central Europe) and its President. Member of the Elected Assembly, 1944. 1948, member of the Provisional Council of State and Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government. In September, 1948, the bulk of his party merged with a section of the General Zionists to form the Progressive Party, under his leadership. Elected M.K., 1949, and resumed the portfolio of Justice. In the Government crisis of October 1950 he tried unsuccessfully to form a Cabinet. After the 1951 elections he left the Government when his party refused to rejoin the coalition without the General Zionists. In 1952 he was again offered the Ministry of Justice on a "personal" basis, but refused it. On the formation of a new Coalition Government in December 1952, however, in which the General Zionists and Progressives were included with Mapai, he accepted the Ministry of Justice. After the refusal of the Progressive Party to join Mr. Sharett's coalition in January 1954, he resigned as Minister of Justice. He returned to the Ministry shortly afterwards when the Progressives reconsidered their stand. He retained the same post in the new coalition formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion in November 1955.

Mr. Rosen is a sound lawyer, specialising in company law, but he suffers from a certain germanic pedantry and heaviness. In political outlook he is a moderate liberal, and is well-disposed to the United Kingdom. He is generally respected.

**99. Rosette, Maurice**

Clerk of the Knesset.

Born in London in 1903. Educated at London University, and the University of Wales. He became chief cost clerk of the Stepney Municipality and was active in Jewish and trade union affairs. He stood unsuccessfully for Parliament. In due course he became head of the Information Department and parliamentary agent of the Jewish Agency in London, a member of the board of deputies of British Jews, chairman of the Political Committee of Poale Zion in England and secretary of the Jewish National Board for Great Britain. He settled in Israel in 1949 and became clerk of the Knesset. In 1950 he accompanied the Israel Parliamentary Delegation to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rosette's knowledge of British political life and methods is varied and extensive. He is pleasant and intelligent and well informed on parliamentary and constitutional matters. Mr. Mikardo, M.P., is married to his sister.

**100. Sahar, Yehezkel**

Inspector-General of Police.

Born in 1907 at Jerusalem. Studied at the High School of Commerce, Tel Aviv. Worked for several years in the Anglo-Palestine Bank. In 1933 studied at the London School of Economics and while there was private secretary to Dr. Weizmann, 1940, on a Zionist mission to the United States. 1941, enlisted and served with the Eighth Army in the Western Desert as commander of a Palestine R.A.S.C. Com-

pany. Discharged as major after serving in Austria. He subsequently acted as liaison officer between the Jewish Agency and British Headquarters in Palestine. A veteran of the Haganah, he became Inspector-General of Police and Director-General of the Ministry of Police at the foundation of the State. In January, 1950, his rank was made equivalent to that of Chief of Staff (rav-alooft).

Mr. Sahar, though critical of British handling of security in the mandatory period, is friendly and intelligent and aims at maintaining British traditions in the Israel Police Force. In 1949 he spent several weeks in the United Kingdom, France and the United States studying police organisations and methods. On his return his enthusiasm for Scotland Yard was almost unbounded.

**101. Saphir, Yosef**

General Zionist M.K.

Born in Jaffa in 1902, educated in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and became a farmer and citrus grower, joining the Executive of the Farmers' Federation in 1938. In 1939 he became the managing director of the Pardess Syndicate, one of the largest citrus growing co-operatives. A year later he became Mayor of Petah Tiqva, a post he held until 1951, becoming chairman of the Home Affairs Committee. When in 1952 the General Zionists entered the Government he was appointed Minister of Health but on his return from abroad he insisted on being given the Ministry of Communications and exchanged portfolios with Mr. Serlin. He relinquished the post in 1955 when the General Zionists left the Government. He is a man of considerable determination and organising ability and seems well-disposed to the United Kingdom. He is married and has two daughters.

**102. Sapir, Pinhas**

Minister of Commerce and Industry.

Born in Poland in 1909. First came to Palestine in 1930. In 1949 he was appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Defence and visited the United States in 1951 on an arms purchasing mission. In December 1951 he assumed responsibility for the development of the Negev and in the same month was appointed a director of the Dead Sea Potash Co. In July 1953 he was appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Finance. Shortly after the General Election in July 1955 it was rumoured that he would be resigning from his post in the Ministry of Finance and spending one year studying in the United Kingdom. He nevertheless accepted nomination as Minister of Commerce and Industry in Mr. Ben-Gurion's Coalition Government, although he is not a member of the Knesset.

Mr. Sapir has shown himself, first at the Ministry of Finance and now at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, to be an honest and capable administrator who approaches problems pragmatically rather than ideologically, unlike many of his colleagues. He is said to be pro-British.

**103. Sasson, Eliahu**

Ambassador to Italy.

Born before 1898 at Aleppo. Brought up in Syria and studied in Turkey. At one time he was a teacher in the French-Jewish School of the Alliance Israélite at Damascus. Active at first in the Syrian nationalist movement, he later devoted himself entirely to Zionism and became (about 1936) head of the Arab Section of the Jewish Agency's Political Department in Jerusalem. Head of the Middle East Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1948. Took a leading part in the armistice negotiations at Rhodes and headed the Israel delegation to the Conciliation Commission in Lausanne (1949) with the rank of Minister. At the end of 1949 he was appointed first Israel

Minister to Turkey. In 1952 he was transferred to Rome.

Mr. Sasson speaks perfect Arabic. While working for the Jewish Agency he established the reputation of being not only a connoisseur of Middle East affairs but also *persona grata* with many leading Arab politicians. He is one of the few Sephardic Jews in the Israeli Foreign Service.

**104. Schocken, Gustav Gershon**

Progressive M.K. and newspaper editor.

Born in 1912 at Zwickau (Saxony) where his father owned a chain store network. Educated at Universities of Heidelberg and London (Social Science). In Palestine since 1933. His family founded Schocken Verlag in Berlin (1931-39) and he is director of its Palestine branch (Schocken Publishing House, Ltd.). In 1937 he and his father took over publication of the principal Hebrew paper of the country, the independent *Ha'aretz*, which he has since edited. In 1955 he was elected to the Knesset on the Progressive list, but announced that the political independence of Ha'aretz would be unaffected.

Mr. Schocken speaks fluent English. He has a cosmopolitan outlook in contrast to the somewhat limited horizon of many of his journalist colleagues. Visited United Kingdom officially in 1950.

**105. Sarlin, Yosef**

General Zionist M.K.

Born in Bialystok in 1906 and educated at Lwow and Warsaw University. He became a lawyer and in 1930, private secretary to the prominent Zionist, Nahum Sokolov. He came to Palestine in 1933 as an active Zionist, establishing himself in the practice of law and commercial enterprise and becoming chairman of the political committee of the Karen Hayesod, deputy chairman of the World Union of General Zionists and a member of the Council of the World Zionist Organisation. In 1949 he was elected to the Knesset on the General Zionist list and in 1950 he visited England with the Israel Parliamentary delegation. He was re-elected to the second Knesset in 1951 and became one of the deputy speakers. When the General Zionists entered the Government in 1952 he was appointed Minister of Communications but immediately afterwards had to relinquish this post to Mr. Saphir and take on the Ministry of Health. Following the withdrawal of the General Zionists from the Government in 1955 he relinquished his Ministerial post. He does not appear to be a very forceful personality and has not as yet made any great mark. He is married and has two sons.

**106. Shaltiel, Aloof (Brigadier) David**

Minister at Mexico City.

Born in 1903 in Germany. Served as an officer in the French Foreign Legion during the Riff War. Came to Palestine in 1924 and joined the Haganah. Went to Europe to obtain arms for it, was imprisoned by the Nazis and tortured by the Gestapo. Returned to Palestine in 1941 as an exchange prisoner, and received the underground Haganah appointment of Area Commander in Haifa and then (till February, 1948) Chief of Intelligence. Commanded the Israel Brigade in Jerusalem throughout the siege of 1948 but was later removed, reportedly for failure to capture the whole city. In October, 1948, he was in charge of the investigation of the activities of dissident military groups. He then visited Czechoslovakia and several South American States, and on return was appointed Inspector General of the Army. He relinquished the post on becoming Commander of the Frontier Force in November, 1949, but was found too independent and unorthodox for the latter

and removed in April, 1950, on being appointed Military Attaché for France and Benelux countries, with residence at Paris. Appointed Minister to Brazil in 1951. Since November 1952, he has also acted as Minister to Venezuela. Friendly and entertaining with a charming wife.

**107. Shapita, Moshe**

Minister of Social Welfare and Religious Affairs.

Born in 1899 at Grodno (Poland). Son of a rabbi, he was educated at the Rabbinical Seminary, Grodno, worked for a time in the Ministry of Jewish Affairs, Lithuania, and in 1924-25 studied in the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary. An active Zionist from early youth and a founder of the Religious Workers' Party (Hapoel Hamizrahi). Represented it at World Zionist Congresses since 1923 and became its outstanding leader and chairman in Palestine, where he settled in 1925. Member of the Zionist General Council since 1927. Elected alternate member of the Jewish Agency Executive in 1935 and since then associated with its Immigration Department. Full member of the Executive, 1945-48. Represented Hapoel Hamizrahi in the Provisional Council of State, 1948, and was Minister of Immigration and Health in the Provisional Government. Negotiated a merger (the Religious bloc) with the Mizrahi and Agudist parties for the elections of 1949 and was returned as M.K. In the new Government he continued as Minister of Immigration and of Health and also became Minister of the Interior. Relations between him and his Mapai colleagues broke down early in 1951, but after the elections he retained the Ministry of Interior in the new coalition, relinquishing the Ministries of Health and Immigration but assuming that of Religious Affairs as a new responsibility. On the entry of the General Zionists into the Coalition in December 1952, he relinquished the Ministry of Interior but retained that of Religious Affairs and in addition took on the Social Welfare portfolio. He was re-elected in 1955 and continues to hold both portfolios.

For over twenty years he has struggled to avoid a split in Hapoel Hamizrahi over the question of whether it should join the Histadrut—a course to which he is opposed. He is said to devote all his spare time to Talmudic study.

**108. Sharett, Moshe**

Mapai M.K. Former Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Born in 1894 at Kherson (Ukraine). Emigrated to Palestine with his parents 1906. Educated at Herzliya Gymnasia, Tel Aviv. Studied law at Istanbul University (1913-14). 1915-18, served as Turkish Army officer (interpreter attached to German liaison staff). 1918-20, on the staff of the Zionist Commission, Jerusalem, and active in the Hitachdut (United Labour) movement. Spent 1920-25 in England, taking B.Sc. degree at London School of Economics and entering the English Executive of Poalei Zion, which he represented at British Labour Party conference. 1925-31, on the editorial staff of the Histadrut organ *Davar*, of which he also produced a weekly edition in English. Joined Mapai on its foundation, 1930, and was later elected to its Executive. 1931-33, private secretary to Arlosoroff. Head of the Jewish Agency Political Department, succeeded him as its Head in 1933 and retained the position, with membership of the Executive, till 1948. In this capacity, was the Agency's main channel of contact with the Government of Palestine and went on numerous missions abroad. During the Second World War was head of the Jewish Agency's Recruiting Department and active in promoting the formation of the Jewish Brigade group. Was one of the Jewish leaders interned at Latrun, 1946. Re-appointed head of the Political Department by the Zionist Congress of December, 1946, but with orders



to head it from Washington, he was throughout 1947 the Agency's principal delegate to the United Nations Organisation. In 1948 he became member of the Provisional Council of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government, and was later obliged to resign from the Jewish Agency Executive. Elected M.K. (No. 2 on the Mapai list) in 1949 and again in 1951, he continued as Minister for Foreign Affairs. He acted as Prime Minister when Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Kaplan were away in 1951, and visited the United Kingdom in 1952. In January 1954 he succeeded Mr. Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister, retaining at the same time the office of Foreign Minister. In the new Coalition Government formed by Mr. Ben-Gurion in November 1955, he continued as Foreign Minister. He reluctantly resigned this post and left the Cabinet in June 1956 after personal disagreements with Mr. Ben-Gurion. His immediate political future is as yet undetermined, but he is unlikely to be inactive for long.

Mr. Sharett is an agreeable individual, a remarkable linguist, a voluble talker, and a very quick worker. He is identified with a policy of reasonableness in the handling of foreign affairs in contrast to the more ruthless approach and single-mindedness of Mr. Ben-Gurion. During his term as Prime Minister he considerably increased his reputation in the country and within his own party. He skilfully held together a turbulent coalition and largely succeeded in restraining the more excitable elements within his party.

#### 109. Shenkar, Arie Leib

President, Manufacturers' Association.  
President, Anglo-Israel Chamber of Commerce.  
Born in 1877 in Kiev Province, Ukraine. Was a textile manufacturer in Moscow for many years. In 1908 he came to Palestine and purchased land for members of a group of which he was treasurer and vice-president. Returning again in 1924 he founded the Lodzia Textile Company, of which he is owner and Managing Director, and the Industrial Bank of Palestine, of which he is Chairman. President of the Manufacturers' Association since its foundation in 1925. Chairman of the Industrial Credit Council of the Palestine Corporation (London) and a Director of the Tel Aviv Development Company.

Mr. Shenkar is a highly respectable old man. He is not happy in the modern world of controlled economy and has made vigorous public attacks on the policy of the Government. He does not speak English.

#### 110. Shiloah, Reuven

Minister, Israel Embassy in Washington.  
Born in 1909 at Jerusalem. One of a family of five. His father is a Jerusalem Rabbi. Educated at the Hebrew University and the Teachers' Seminary, Jerusalem. Specialised in Arabic studies and has travelled extensively in the Middle East. Early connected with the Haganah; organiser of its Arab intelligence service. Taught Arabic in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and from 1935 to 1937 was a teacher at the Alliance School at Bagdad. Visited Kurdistan in 1932. In 1932 he was editor of the Arab section of the *Palestine Post*. Friend of Arlosoroff, who interested him in the Socialist youth movement. As assistant political secretary, Histadrut Executive, in charge of Arab affairs (1932-36), he helped to found the Arab Association of Palestine Workers. During the riots of 1936 he was lent by the Histadrut to the Jewish Agency's Political Department and remained in it till 1948. He became head of the Intelligence Section of the Haganah and was for many years liaison officer between the Political Department and British military authorities, including General Wingate. Member of the Jewish Delegation at the Round Table Conference in

London (1939). During the World War, as Jewish liaison officer, he assisted the Allies in planning operations behind the enemy lines in neighbouring Arab States and Europe. Went to San Francisco in 1945 as a Jewish Agency delegate to the United Nations Conference and remained in America and Europe for over a year, including a special Haganah mission in the United States and service in the Jewish Agency office in London (1946), and as Mr. Ben-Gurion's secretary while in Paris. On the establishment of the State of Israel he became "Special Adviser" in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding the third place in its hierarchy. Took a leading part in discussions with the Conciliation Commission at Lausanne (1949) and in secret negotiations with Jordan (1949-51). Was a member of the Israel delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 1950. He was appointed Minister to the Israel Embassy in Washington in August, 1953.

Mr. Shiloah is a serious and sinister-looking individual with a scar across his rather asiatic features, acquired in the bombing of the Jewish Agency. He improves on closer acquaintance. He is able but probably unscrupulous where his country's interests are concerned. He was responsible for Israel's intelligence services from 1948-52. His wife is American.

#### 111. Shinnar, Pinhas E.

Head of Israel Purchasing Mission at Cologne.  
Born in Stuttgart in 1905 and educated at high school there and at the Universities of Heidelberg, Tuebingen and Frankfurt. Was manager of a trust company in Germany and official receiver at a Magistrates' Court in Berlin before coming to Palestine in 1934. Since coming to Israel he has held many important posts in the economic and commercial world. He has been a director of investment companies and of the leading Hebrew newspaper *Ha'aretz* and Controller of Fuel at the Ministry of Finance, and he was for some time Director of the Department for "Imports without Payment." He was also for some time Economic Counsellor at the Israel Legation in London. On his return to Israel in 1951 he became Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on German Affairs and a director of the Israel Petroleum Distribution Company. He was put in charge of the negotiations for a Reparations Agreement with Germany in 1952 and carried the negotiations through to a successful conclusion. In April 1953, he was appointed head of the Israel Purchasing Commission in Germany with the personal rank of Minister, and was put in charge of all purchases made under the Reparations Agreement. Before accepting this post he insisted on being given wide powers and considerable discretion.

#### 112. Shitreet, Behor Shalom

Minister of Police.  
Born in 1895 at Tiberias of an old-established Arabic-speaking family. Educated at the "Alliance Israélite" School and Rabbinical College, Tiberias, and later (1926-30) at the Law Classes, Jerusalem. Though a Sephardi, he joined the Zionist Movement in 1910. Started as a teacher of French, Hebrew and Arabic and later worked in his father's business. In 1919 he joined the Police Force under British military administration and subsequently made a career in the Department of Police and Prisons of the Government of Palestine, specialising in criminal investigation. 1927, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Tel Aviv. Instructor (1928) and head (1931) of the Police School in Jerusalem. Left the Police in 1935 to become Magistrate, sitting in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Haifa and other courts. Chief Magistrate, Tel Aviv, 1945; Senior Magistrate, 1947. From 1942 onwards he helped to organise the Sephardim in defence of their rights in the Jewish community and later became

chairman of the Sephardic Committee formed for this purpose. As such he entered the Provisional Council of State, 1948, and became Minister of Police and of Minorities in the Provisional Government. Later in the year he pledged his support for a "Popular Party," but as it did not materialise, he headed in 1949 the list of the "Union of Sephardic and Levantine Communities" of which he and three others were elected members of the Knesset. In the new Government he carried on with the same two portfolios, but that of Minorities was abolished in June 1949. In 1951, following the disintegration of the Sephardim movement, he was included in the Mapai list for the elections. He led the Israel delegation to the international conference of Sephardic Jews in Paris in 1951 and is a vice-president of the World Federation of Sephardic Communities. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1955 and continued as Minister of Police in the coalition formed in November of that year by Mr. Ben-Gurion.

Mr. Shitreet is a leisurely and expansive oriental who is as much at home with Arabs as with Jews. Though he has little education and no European experience, he was a competent magistrate, courageous, hard-working and with a reputation for honesty. He appears to be keen on maintaining British traditions in the Israel Police Force.

#### 113. Sieff, Rebecca

World President, Women's International Zionist Organisation (W.I.Z.O.).

Educated at Manchester University. In 1920, in collaboration with Mrs. Weizmann, she founded and became first President of the London branch of W.I.Z.O. After holding various high offices in the Organisation in the United Kingdom, she was elected World President in 1949. She has since travelled widely on behalf of the Organisation, and devotes her time almost entirely to it.

Mrs. Sieff, who is the wife of Israel Sieff and the sister of Sir Simon Marks, has made Israel her home and is now a distinctive feature of the Israel landscape; she appears to regard herself as equally British and Israeli. A forceful personality, she is now losing her grip but is still carried along by the momentum of many years of public and social activity. When in Israel she entertains extensively at her attractive English-style home in Tel Mond.

#### 114. Simhoni, Aloof Mishne Assaf

Commander of Southern Region.

Born in Haifa in 1922. Married, with three children. A Company Commander in the Palmach before the War of Independence and a Brigade Commander during it. Appointed to present post in July 1956.

#### 115. Simon, Dr. Michael

Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Born on September 19, 1901 at Berlin. Studied at the Universities of Berlin, Frankfurt and Tuebingen. Dr. Simon came to Israel in 1924, and in 1925 and 1926 was a teacher at the Hebrew Secondary School at Haifa. In 1926 and 1927 he served as secretary of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem and in the following year he was appointed as editor of the Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine in which position he served until 1934. He then took up an appointment as general secretary of the Migdal Insurance Company. From 1945 to 1948 Dr. Simon was director of the Jewish Agency Department for Resettlement of Ex-Servicemen. He was a veteran member of the Haganah and participated in actions in 1929 and 1936-40, also in the defence of Jerusalem in 1947-48.

Dr. Simon is a hardworking, somewhat fussy, but on the whole capable bureaucrat, with a wide

knowledge and considerable experience. In his job as the first Chief of Protocol he has been ready to recognise his inexperience, and to ask advice from members of the diplomatic corps. He is an enthusiastic sailor and is a reserve officer in the Israel Navy with a proper admiration for the Royal Navy. He is not without a sense of humour of the German type, and is generally pro-British.

He has an intelligent, friendly and voluble wife.

#### 116. Sneh, Dr. Moshe

Communist M.K.

Born in 1899 at Radzyn (Poland). Graduated in medicine at Warsaw University (M.D.) but took up journalism and politics, becoming chairman of the Zionist Students' Organisation and later leader of the General Zionist Organisation in Poland. A delegate to Zionist Congresses from 1933, he was elected member of the Zionist Actions Committee in 1935. In 1939 he served as captain in the Polish army, was taken prisoner by the Russians, escaped and reached Palestine via France in 1940. From 1940 to 1946 he served on the staff of the Haganah underground forces, becoming Chief of Staff by 1944, and engaged in organising illegal immigration. He was also active in politics in the "A" Group of General Zionists. In 1945-46 he took a leading part in bringing together the General Zionists "A" and "B" (Left and Right wings) and for a short time presided over the united party. In 1945 he also entered the Jewish Agency Executive and acted as its ambassador at large in Europe.

During this period Dr. Sneh adopted a pro-Soviet orientation and at the end of 1947, having quarrelled with the General Zionist Party and the Jewish Agency, he resigned from both and took a leading part in founding the leftist United Labour Party (Mapam). Though, unlike other participants, he brought with him no organised body, he became a member of the Mapam Central Committee and of the editorial board of the party's newspaper *Al Hamishmar*. In July 1948 he attended the World Jewish Congress and sided with the East European delegates who tried to give it a pro-Soviet bias. Elected Mapam M.K. in 1949, he led the extreme Left wing of the party and in 1949-50 was influential in preventing it from joining Mapai in the Government coalition. He became the leading spirit in the Israel branch of the Soviet-sponsored "Peace Movement" and secretary of the League for Friendship with the U.S.S.R. Re-elected to the Second Knesset in 1951. In January 1953, he and his supporters broke away from Mapam and formed the "Left Faction," an extreme pro-Soviet group collaborating closely with the Communist Party. In October 1954, the "Faction" disbanded and Sneh formally joined the Communist Party, securing election to the Third Knesset in 1955 on the Communist list.

Dr. Sneh is a good speaker and a clever man, but is regarded by his political opponents as an insincere schemer who turned pro-Soviet for reasons of personal ambition. However, he has not profited from his intrigues for, despite his ability, he is less popular with the Communists than the present leader, Mikunis, and is distrusted by all other parties. He is at present responsible for the preparation of the Communist Party's manifestos.

#### 117. Sprinzak, Joseph

Speaker of the Knesset.

Born in 1886 in Russia. University studies in Russia and Switzerland. Came to Palestine in 1909, already a Zionist-Socialist, and entered the labour movement becoming a leading member of Mapai. Repeatedly represented the Histadrut, of which he was one of the founders, at Zionist congresses; is chairman of the Zionist General Council



Presidium. For many years member of the Histadrut Executive, he was its secretary-general from 1935 to 1949. On the board of directors of the Jewish National Fund, Foundation Fund and various other institutions. Was member of the Elected Assembly and Va'ad Leumi Executive. In August 1948 he entered the Provisional Council of State (replacing Mrs. Myerson) and soon after was elected its chairman. Elected Deputy (5th on the Mapai list) in 1949 and president (Speaker) of the Knesset, he relinquished the General Secretariat of the Histadrut in July. During Dr. Weizmann's absences abroad in 1949 and 1950 he acted as President of Israel and in 1951 became acting President for the duration of Dr. Weizmann's illness. Re-elected Speaker of the Second and Third Knessets in 1951 and 1955 respectively.

Mr. Sprinzak is a good chairman with a strong sense of humour and is generally liked and respected in the Knesset, but in his conduct of parliamentary procedure he frequently shows bias in favour of Mapai and the Government coalition. A small man with a large drooping moustache, he cuts a slightly comical figure. A prominent sponsor of cultural and educational institutions. Speaks some English and is very friendly. A close friend of Mr. Ben-Gurion.

#### 118. Tankus (or Tana), Aloof Mishne Shmuel

Commander, Israel Navy.  
Born in Palestine in 1914. Nothing is known of him until, in 1954, he was appointed Commander of the Israel Navy.

Tankus is a quiet, awkward and shy man who makes no particular impression on first acquaintance. His naval experience and knowledge is strictly limited, though he is recognised as being generally competent. Seemingly not a strong personality, he may owe his important position to good Mapai connections.

#### 119. Tekoah, Joseph

Director of Armistice Affairs Division, M.F.A.  
Born in Poland in 1925. Educated at the Université l'Aurore in China and Harvard University. Served on the Israel Delegation to the United Nations in New York and Paris in 1948. Settled in Israel in 1949 when he became Deputy Legal Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1953 and 1954 he served as the Foreign Ministry Representative on the Mixed Armistice Commissions. In 1955 he became the chief representative of the Mixed Armistice Commissions when responsibility for the latter was transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the Foreign Ministry.

Tekoah has a dogmatic, doctrinaire mind which makes him a difficult and tiresome man with whom to do business, though he is not unfriendly. He enjoys considerable authority in the M.F.A. and works in closely with the Director-General. He is somewhat obsessed with his own importance.

#### 120. Tolkowsky, Aloof Mishne (Colonel) Dan

Commander of the Air Force.  
Born in Tel Aviv in 1921. Educated in England (B.Sc.). Joined the R.A.F. in 1942 and served as a fighter pilot in 238 Squadron in the Mediterranean theatre from 1943-44. Released as a Flight Lieutenant in 1945. Joined the Israel Air Force in 1948 and played a leading part in planning operations in the Palestine War as a Deputy Director of Operations. In 1950 he was appointed Inspector General, but in 1951 he retired. He was recalled shortly afterwards and appointed Deputy Air Officer Commanding, succeeding Aloof Laskov as Air Officer Commanding in May 1953. Aloof Mishne Tolkowsky, who is the son of the Israel Minister to Switzerland, speaks Hebrew, French and perfect

English and is the most highly educated and cultivated of the air force commanders, but beneath an easy Anglo-Saxon manner he is intensely nationalistic, shrewd, secretive and aggressive.

#### 121. Toubi, Tewfik

Communist M.K.  
Born in 1922 at Haifa. A founder of the Arab Workers' Congress and one of the leaders of the Arab League for National Liberation, he followed the latter when in 1948 it merged with the (Jewish) Palestine Communist Party to form the united Israel Communist Party. Elected M.K. in 1949 (second on the Communist list) he has been very active in voicing Arab grievances before the Knesset, in the "Peace Movement" and in other forms of agitation. He has attended numerous Peace Conferences. Re-elected to the Second Knesset in 1951 and to the Third Knesset in 1955. He visited Moscow with Mikunis in 1952.

He is a Greek Orthodox Christian and is married to a Jewess. He is also alleged to be a former colleague of Haj Amin el Husseini.

#### 122. Tsur, Yaacov

Ambassador to France.  
Born at Wilna in 1906 and educated at Jerusalem and at the Universities of Florence and Paris. He came to Palestine in 1921 and in 1926 was employed by the Tel Aviv municipality. He joined the editorial board of *Ha'aretz* in 1929 and later worked in the headquarters of the Jewish National Fund. He was the Jewish Agency's representative in Egypt from 1943-45 and from 1947-48 was chairman of the Mobilisation Committee in Jerusalem. He went to the Argentine as Minister in June 1949. He speaks fluent English and Russian.

#### 123. Wahrhaftig, Zerach

Hapoel Hamizrahi M.K.  
Born in Warsaw in 1902. Educated at a Yeshiva and at Warsaw University. He was in private legal practice from 1933 to 1939 and lived in the United States before coming to Palestine in 1945. He was vice-president of Hapoel Hamizrahi, chairman of the Central Palestine Office from 1936 to 1939 and deputy director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs in New York from 1942 to 1947. From 1947 to 1948 was director of the Law Department of the Va'ad Leumi in Jerusalem. In 1948 became director of the Research Institute for Jewish Law at the Ministry of Justice. He was a member of the Provisional Government Council from 1947 to 1948, and was elected a M.K. in 1949 and in 1951, when he was appointed Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs, a post to which he was reappointed in December 1952. For a few months he was also Chairman of the Knesset Legislation Committee. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1955.

He is a member of the Zionist General Council. In the Knesset he has considerable influence. He is an authority on a wide range of subjects, a Liberal, and a conscientious and earnest legislator. On religious matters he is less extreme than most members of the Orthodox parties.

#### 124. Wilenska, Mrs. Esther

Communist M.K.  
Born in Lithuania in 1918. Educated at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Came to Palestine as an immigrant in 1933. Joined the Communist Party and became a member of its Central Committee. Meier Wilner, also a Communist Deputy, was her first husband. She was elected to the Political Committee of the Palestine Communist Party in 1945 and to its Central Committee in 1946. She became head of its propaganda office in Haifa in the same year. In July 1951 she was elected to

the Knesset on the Communist list and was re-elected in 1955. She has been a municipal councillor at Tel Aviv since 1950. Associate editor of the Communist newspaper, *Kol Ha'am*.

She is certainly one of the leading Communists in Israel and displays great activity. She is thought to be very able, but entirely humourless. A good rabble-rouser, she is regarded by the Israel authorities as a force to be reckoned with.

#### 125. Wilner, Meier

Communist M.K.  
Born in Poland in 1919. Educated at the Hebrew University. Came to Palestine as an immigrant in 1938. Was a member of the Provisional State Council. M.K. since 1949. He has made a series of violent speeches in the Knesset and elsewhere and is often on the verge of being suspended. An active member of the Peace Movement and a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee.

#### 126. Wydra, Naphthali

Managing Director of Israel Navigation Company, Limited.

Born in Leipzig in 1909. A Doctor of Law and Economist. During the period 1933-36, he was manager of the Haifa Shipping Agency. From 1936-47, he acted as manager of the Maritime Department of the Jewish Agency. He is at present director and manager of "Zim" Israel Navigation Company, Limited, and Shoham Sea Services, Limited, in which capacity he exerts considerable influence on all policy affecting the country's merchant marine—for which he has considerable ambitions.

Dr. Wydra is a courteous man and an easy conversationalist.

#### 127. Yaari, Meir

Mapam M.K. (1949).  
Born Reshov (Galicia) in 1897. Educated in Poland, at Vienna University and at the Agricultural Institute in Vienna. Was a pupil of Sigmund Freud. Served in the Austrian army in the First World War. Came to Palestine in 1920. He was one of the founders of Hashomer Hatzair in Vienna and in Palestine became one of the chief leaders of the party and a member of its world executive. He lives in Kibbutz Merhaviah and is a member of the executive of the Kibbutz Artzi. A member of the Zionist General Council and of the Histadrut Executive. In 1949 he was No. 2 on the Mapam list. He afterwards played a leading part in the abortive negotiations with Mapai for the forming of a coalition. In 1951 and 1955 he was re-elected at the head of the party list.

Mr. Yaari is one of the real leaders of Mapam. In the Knesset he has been content to leave Rittin to act as the party's spokesman. At the end of 1952, however, he led the opposition to Sneh in Mapam and eventually forced Sneh and his supporters out of the party in January 1953. He has been active in the peace movement and presided over its first public meeting in Tel Aviv. He is a member of the World Committee of the movement, attended the Warsaw Peace Conference in 1950 and was elected a member of its Presidium. He also attended the World Peace Council in Berlin in 1952.

Unspectacular but effective, he achieves his objectives by slow stages, but with the persistence of a termite.

#### 128. Yadin, Rav-Aloof Yigal

Former Chief of Staff.  
Born in 1918 at Jerusalem, son of Professor Sukenik the archaeologist. Studied at the Hebrew University (M.A., archaeology); specialised in history

of ancient wars in Palestine and has published various studies. Served in the Haganah from 1933. Was in Wingate's "night squads." A senior Haganah staff officer till 1937, he was District Instructor, Jerusalem, in 1938. After the World War he appears to have been appointed head of a department for planning operations in support of the resistance movement in Palestine, but to have resigned and returned to civilian life in 1946 when the Jewish political leaders were interned. On the outbreak of disturbances following the United Nations Partition Resolution he was called back to active service in December 1947. From then till January 1949, as Chief Operations Officer he successfully directed the campaigns in Galilee, the Jerusalem corridor and the Negev. He then became chief of "G" Branch, took a leading part in the Rhodes armistice negotiations, went on a tour of European countries and in September 1949, was attached to the Prime Minister as personal military adviser. In November 1949, he was promoted to Rav-Aloof (the highest rank) and replaced Dori as Chief of Staff. Presumably in execution of Mr. Ben-Gurion's army policy, his appointment as Chief of Staff was followed by a weeding out of Mapam officers and various measures of military reorganisation. In December 1952, he resigned as Chief of Staff after differences with Mr. Ben-Gurion and was succeeded by the more amenable Makleff. He spent a period of study in England and returned to Israel in 1954. Although his time is devoted principally to archaeology he keeps in close touch with the leading figures in the country and is generally respected by them.

Rav-Aloof Yadin combines the self-confidence of a locally-born "sabrah" with the learning of a Jewish scholar. He has an intimate knowledge of the Palestinian terrain. As Chief of Staff he was inclined to take himself too seriously, but he is fundamentally an agreeable and friendly person. He is undoubtedly able and it is probable that he will sooner or later return to power in Israel in some capacity. Speaks English and Arabic.

#### 129. Zinder, Harry Zvi

Director of Kol Israel, Government Broadcasting Service, since August 1, 1955.

Born in 1909 in the United States. Began as a free lance writer in 1933 and subsequently worked for the *Palestine Post* and Associated Press. In 1941 he became a staff and war correspondent for *Time* and *Life* magazines in the Middle and Far East, and later bureau chief in Paris and the Middle East. He joined the staff of the Jewish Agency in Washington in 1948, moving in 1951 to the Israel Office of Information in New York and the Israel Delegation to the United Nations.

Mr. Zinder is intelligent and friendly, possessing a pleasant personality. Though an ardent Zionist, he retains the manner and approach of a travelled American. His wife shares these qualities.

#### 130. Zur, Aluf Mishne Zvi (formerly Cherlenko)

Born in Russia in 1923 and came to Israel in 1925. Educated in Israel and the United States, he joined Haganah at the age of 16. In the War of Independence he commanded a battalion in the operation to clear the corridor and open the road to Jerusalem. Later he served in the Negev against the Egyptians. After the war his promotion was rapid and over the heads of many senior officers. He held in succession appointments as Assistant Head of G Branch and later Adjutant-General, a post he filled for three years. In February 1956 he was appointed Commander, Central Command, at Ramle.

Still only 33, he is considered a "bright boy" among the senior Israeli commanders. Painstaking



and self-disciplined, he approaches all problems in a methodical and workmanlike manner. He is quiet and pleasant, and speaks excellent English.

### 131. Zuubi, Seifeddin Muhammad

Arab Democrat M.K.

Born in Nazareth in 1913. Was employed for about ten years as a food inspector by the Nazareth Municipality. In 1944 he became a land broker and it became known that he was being paid by the Jewish National Fund, a fact which considerably

embarrassed the Zuubi clan in Nazareth and Galilee. In 1947 his family, which had formed itself into a party, publicly disowned him for his active co-operation with the Jews. An attempt was made on his life by Arabs in 1947. In 1949 he was put up as an Arab candidate for the Knesset by Mapai against the wishes of his clan and was elected as one of the two Nazareth Democratic members. In 1951 and 1955 he was re-elected on the "Israel Arab Democrats" list, who support the Government.

He knows little English or Hebrew and appears to be an opportunist with no strong convictions.